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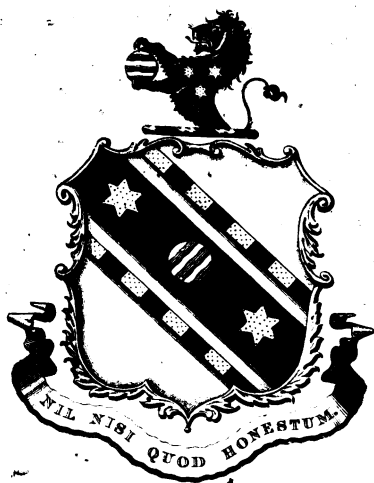
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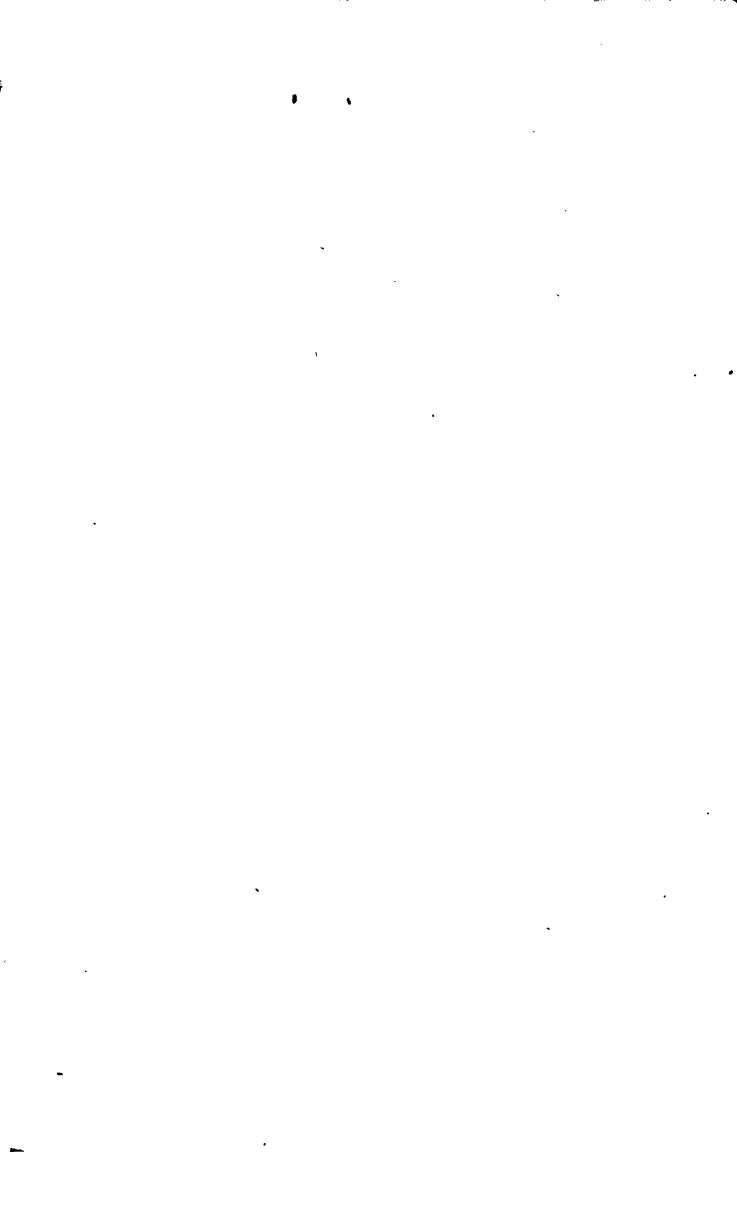


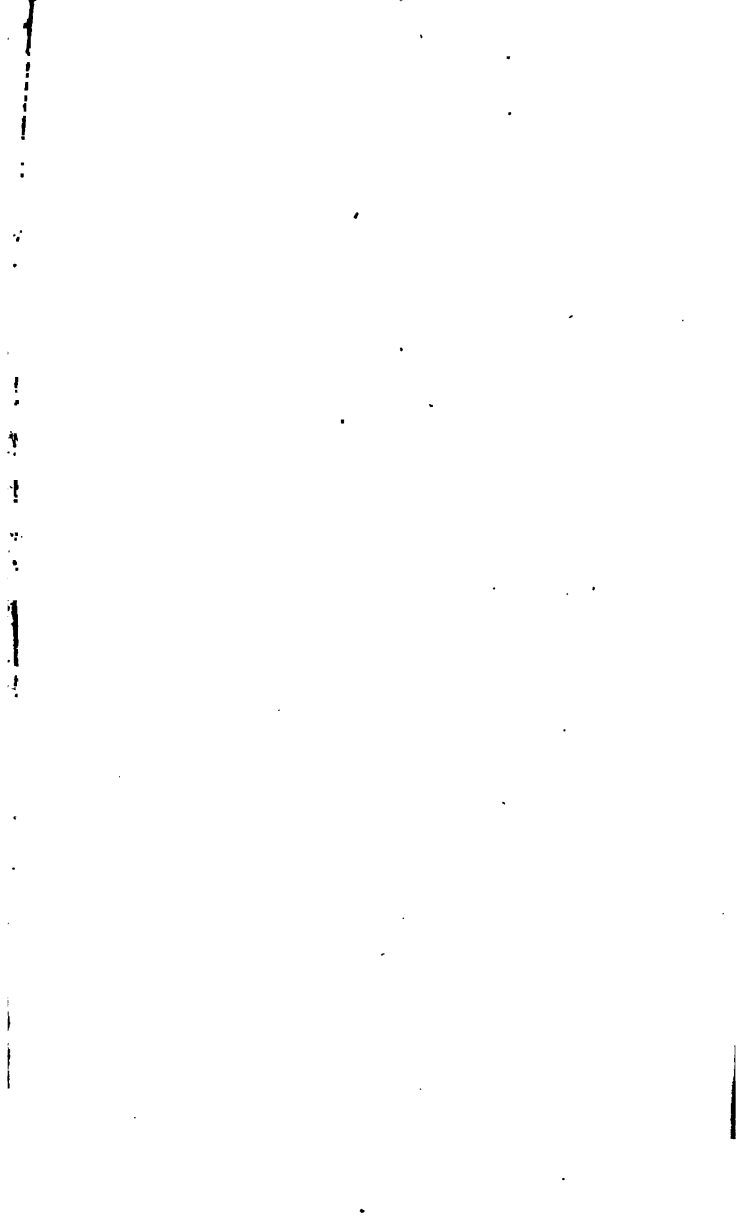
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ELLEN,

COUNTESS OF

CASTLE HOWEL,

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

copy
By MRS. BENNETT.

“Others make men, I only report them.”

MONTAIGNE.

VOL. I.

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A P O L O G Y.

ALTHOUGH a Work sent into the World confessedly abounding in Error, will not allow a Defence, it is hoped it may admit an Apology.

The History of Ellen was composed at a Period, when the Writer was, in consequence of Engagements, entered into on laudable Motives, involved in the greatest Distress, both of Mind and Circumstances.

A P O L O G Y.

The few who know the Author's History, for the last Eighteen Months, know also, the little reason she had to apprehend the evil she has encountered. But it is to Him only, who fashioned the Mind of Man to the destined Trials, her *Sufferings* can be known.

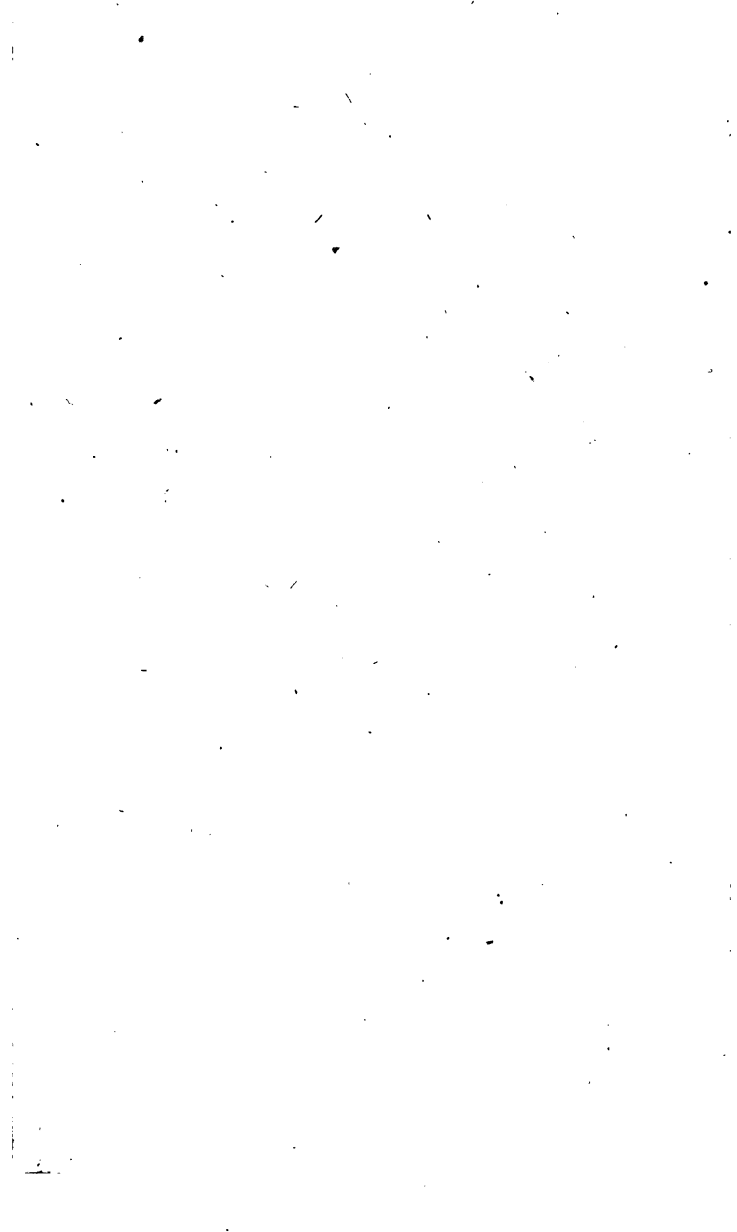
Four Hundred Miles distant from Home, Family and Friends, a Stranger in a Country, where she was literally *taken in*, her Spirit broken, her Health impaired, her little Fortune sinking, the unoffending Victim of a Party, who forgot their Character and Manhood, to combine against the Laws they professed to Support, and the Sex they were born to protect, her Domestic Peace and *dearest pride* totally destroyed, what wonder Female Fortitude sunk under such accumulated Ills? and that as a Resource from Mental Derangement she sought,

A P O L O G Y.

fought, in the airy Regions of Fancy, any Subject which by diverting thought from "Self," might sometimes afford a temporary "oblivion of Sorrow."

At this Time, and under these circumstances, was Ellen conceived and brought to maturity: Thus, then, she is presented to the Public, as an alleviation of Grief and Misfortune; and as such, may her demerits meet indulgence from the Bosom of Sympathy, and her Errors escape the keen Edge of severe Criticism; may the Reader, happier than the Author was, and more capable than she ever will be, become at once both Judge and Protector.

LONDON, MARCH 12, 1794.



E L L E N,
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL.

CHAP. I.

ON one of the dark stormy nights of December, when the wind and snow without, opposed to a cheerful circle round the blazing fire within, formed a striking contrast in favor of the latter, the family of an ancient Baronet, whose seat was embosomed in the

VOL. I.

B

brown

E L L E N.

brown mountains of North Wales, were suddenly disturbed by a noise, which called forth its native guards.

Lion, Whitefoot, Bruin and Dulcet, quietly stretched at the feet of the domestics, before a large kitchen fire, were instantly roused. Scarce had Edward Griffiths, the grey-headed butler and house steward, unbarred the folding doors, which lead into the court-yard, than the aforesaid guards rushed out in full cry; and in a second, the report of a pistol was heard.

But before I proceed further, it may be proper to describe the family and mansion, thus unusually disturbed.

Code Gwyn, is a large Gothic mansion, built at a time, when imperfect laws and civil discord obliged the chiefs of the country to consult safety, more than pleasure and convenience, in the construction and situation of their houses; it stood at the foot of a very high mountain, on the top of which still remained

remained the ruins of a fort, which was its defence to the north; it was surrounded by innumerable trees, planted time out of mind, and forming avenues in all directions, which, as the branches entwined, excluded the solar ray: at the end of one of the front avenues ran a rapid and, now, discoloured torrent, over which was an antient stone bridge, the scene of many a bloody fray, when the gallant ancestors of the present family maintained their right against the inroads of the mountaineers.

The building itself was in the form of a fortress; it was enveloped with high walls, and surrounded by court yards; the top of the middle building was crowned with turrets, and at the four corners stood towers, whose nodding ruins seemed to tremble at the ravage of all destroying time: the entrance was through a pair of large, heavy oak, folding doors, into a spacious hall, ornamented with rusty swords, shields, helmets, trophies, banners and bucks horns. On the opposite side were a pair of correspondent doors, which

opened to the mountain ; but, as a lawn intervened, free from the heavy plantations, which were carried in a serpentine form to the old fort, they admitted, what was excluded from every other part of the house, the uninterrupted light of heaven. The windows were large, heavy, and ill painted ; the shutters and frames, oak, which, the long labours of household damsels had converted into mirrors : the floors and grand staircase were of the same materials, and in the same order ; the furniture, particularly of the best apartments, was grand, but antique ; and, though every part of the house exhibited proofs of great female management, the damask hangings, spite of neat darning, were in a ruinous state. The hall appeared to be the bond of union between the heads of the family and the domestics—there the harper had his seat, and there the avocations and labours of the day constantly closed with a dance, in which all the younger part of the inmates mingled, without a frown on the brow of pride, or presumption in the bosom of poverty.

Sir

Sir Arthur Meredith was, at the period this history opens, in his seventy-fifth year, tall, corpulent, and, apparently, robust; a profusion of white waving locks parted on his fair open forehead, and conveyed some idea of their hyacinthian beauty, before age had silvered them over; his large black eyes still retained the fire, which, when animated by sensibility, or inflamed with anger, was, in either degree, pleasing or awful; a Roman nose, florid cheeks, and teeth still perfectly sound and white, formed a face, that, from youth to age, could hardly be said to decay, since, in both, it was remarkably handsome; but time had been less lenient to his person; that had been so tortured by habitual gout, and chronic disease, as to render the use of a wheel-chair necessary, whenever he removed from one apartment to another, on which account, the room adjoining the great parlour, formerly a library, was his bed-chamber.

Lady Meredith, six years younger than Sir Arthur, was a tall, thin woman, whose

mild blue eyes, fair complexion, and a certain placidity of countenance and manners, invited confidence, and inspired respect; her heart was the seat of truth, and her tongue the law of kindness: She was the heiress of a noble Welch family, whose dignity far exceeded their wealth; her estate was exceedingly involved when she married Sir Arthur, who was of too thoughtless a turn to attend to payment of, either principal or interest; the mortgage had been fore-closed, and the estate long passed into other hands,

This venerable pair had been blessed with a numerous offspring, four of whom were now living.

Edmund Meredith, who, as second son, was, according to the antient custom of the family, brought up to the church, in order to enjoy the living of Code Gwyn, into which he was inducted by his father; having lost his elder brother, was now heir to the estate and title. His character will be best told by his actions;

actions; his ostensible residence was at the rectory, but most of his time was passed at Code Gwyn.

Catherine, a virgin of thirty-two, had early in life imbibed a taste for reading. The old library abounded with romances, and she had been eighteen years dreaming of dwarfs, tournaments, distressed damsels and wounded knights: She read 'till day-light, slept 'till noon, wrote verses, took snuff and seldom wore whole stockings; but, with all her eccentricities, her heart was sensible to the finer feelings. Without a regular system of conduct, she was benevolence itself; she could seldom keep a shilling in her purse, and as it happened that there always were, in or out of the family, who wanted some article of cloathing, and as Catherine Meredith was sure to be the confidant of such wants, her wardrobe was very ill furnished.

Lewis was a lieutenant in the navy, who, on account of the eminent assistance of Sir

ELLEN.

Arthur at a strongly contested election, had been recommended to the patronage of a naval commander ; but the party interest having coalesced, and Sir Arthur of no further use in that point of view, the young man had served ten years a lieutenant, and had been now absent on the West India station four years.

Agnes, a handsome woman of twenty-six, a great manager, who, in conjunction with Mrs. Martha Griffiths, housekeeper, and sister to the butler, made the best pastry, pickles and preserves in the kingdom ; she was also famous for home-made wines, mead and vinegars ; the brewer had his directions from her, and she had all the merit of the fine flavored cyder ; she inspected, with Mrs. Griffiths' assistance, both dairy and poultry, and if the female servants were disposed to be idle, they were sure of a lecture, for she exactly knew the quantity of knitting or spinning their other business would permit ; and, as the profits were her own allowance, she was, comparatively, rich.

Mary,

Mary, a very plain girl of twenty-two, had the rage of scribbling on her: She was so happy as to have a bosom friend in the next parish, subject to the same disease; and as their correspondence, which was carried on in fictitious names, was the mutual joy of their lives, it is not impossible, but the world may be one day favored with the letters of **LUCRETIA** and **AMANTHIS**.

There was also in this family a petted grand-daughter, the posthumous child of their eldest son, who died in a decline, and was followed by a beautiful young woman, his wife, within one hour after the birth of her infant.

Sir Arthur Meredith succeeded his father in an estate of two thousand pounds a year, charged with a heavy mortgage, and younger childrens' portions.

The family lived precisely in the same style, from generation to generation; the same

number of domestics, the same mode of living, and the same rental from their farms; and having neglected to raise their tenants, equivalent to the advance, of every necessary of life, these had grown into opulence, as their generous landlord had, insensibly, become involved in difficulties.

Sir Arthur, therefore, so far from discharging the debts and old incumbrances, was every day adding new ones.

John Morgan, Esq. a rich neighbour, willingly advanced to Sir Arthur, on every emergency, and the ease wherewith money was obtained, so lulled the Baronet, and he was, besides, of so easy, hospitable and benevolent a disposition, that, while he saw the long-familiar faces of his train of domestics, while his old coach held together, and the almost foundered coach horses could draw his Lady and family to church, while that family were tranquil and happy, he seldom burthened his thoughts with the state of his finances. As he

the rents came in, the steward paid them away ; when money was wanting, Mr. Morgan provided it, without giving Sir Arthur any other trouble, than just signing a parchment, by way of security, in which, indeed, lately, it had been thought proper for Mr. Edmund Meredith to join.

On the evening the disturbance happened ~~the~~ began to relate, the family at Code Gwyn had, according to antient custom, been dancing out the old year, and the younger part had just left the great hall on a summons to supper, when the firing a pistol called every being out, save Sir Arthur, who was lame, and his Lady, who, being subject to nervous affections, had not power to stir.

Sounds of different voices approaching the house, mingled with joyful exclamations, still more excited the wonder of Sir Arthur, when a sun-burnt young man, in blue uniform, entered and knelt before him, followed by the whole posse who had gone out, and two other

strangers ; one, a square built man in blue, the other, a tall, sickly looking person, enveloped in great coats.

Lewis Meredith had nearly fallen a martyr to the climate, rather than leave his ship, when the Colonel of a regiment on the station became, unexpectedly, by the death of his uncle and cousin, a Peer of the Realm of Great Britain; some wild excesses having rendered his absence from England convenient and necessary, he had exchanged a lieutenancy in the guards for a company in the West Indies, and after long residence was thought to be dying, when, by the opportune departure of his relation, he became a Peer, and a man of fortune. Mr. Macshead, surgeon of the man of war to which Lewis Meredith belonged, a Scotchman of great medical knowledge, had been persuaded by the lieutenant, to give his attendance to Colonel Claverton, who wanted confidence in the Surgeon of his own company, and Meredith, out of *his little*, assisted the Colonel's very reduced purse.

The

The first thing Colonel Claverton did, on receiving the news of his good fortune, was, to take his passage home, and as nothing was so dear to him as self, and as he believed Lieutenant Meredith one of the best sailors, and Macsheathean one of the best Doctors in the world, he prevailed on the Commander in chief to give each of these officers leave to return to England, on account of health, and generously engaged to pay their passage.

Meredith, as we have said, was an invalid; but Macsheathean's motives for accompanying his noble patient were too deep and manifold to be at this time delineated. They set sail in a Merchant-ship, which brought, them, after a tempestuous voyage, off Anglesea, where they were obliged to put in, and, to the Lieutenant's great joy, he found himself, after a few hours travel, thirty miles only from his paternal home.

The weather was intensely cold; great quantities of snow had fallen, and, before the

mails were established, every traveller knows how tedious and difficult a journey from those parts to London was; Lord Claverton was, really, too much indisposed to undertake it, and the inns being inconvenient and ill furnished, it was with great satisfaction, he heard a chaise and four would carry them in the course of one day to a comfortable habitation.

At the rattling of the carriage over the stone bridge, the dogs, who were unused to the sound of any, but the heavy old coach wheels, took the alarm, and the foremost having reached the chaise, just as the friends were assisting the invalid out, he, who was not remarkable for patience, fired his pistol and shot the animal dead.

Never was family more united than that of Code Gwyn: Sir Arthur wept aloud on his son's neck, while his daughters were dividing their attention between their almost fainting mother and the welcome brother. Mr. Meredith

redith prest the Lieutenant to his fraternal heart, the servants crowded in, and old Griffiths fobbed.

Those exquisite sensations in some degree subsided, in respect to the strangers, and the Lieutenant had no sooner introduced Lord Claverton by name, than Griffiths hurried the domestics out of the parlour.

Lady Catherine rose with dignity to welcome them; Miss Catherine figured to herself the idea of a sick knight, and advanced nearer, to take a full view of a person, whose arrival favored much of the books she had studied. Miss Agnes retired immediately to consult Mrs. Griffiths on the new arrangement of the table; and Mary, having a Lord for her subject, was determined to begin a letter, that very night, to her friend, Miss Peggy Jones.

Sir Arthur and Mr. Meredith were in-born gentlemen; they respected, without being

ing abashed at the presence of a nobleman, and the true politeness, inherent to the character they supported, rendered their compliments easy to their guests, and had the effect, of composing the rest of the family: mutual introductions took place, an easy chair was drawn next the fire for the invalid, Miss Agnes sent in a salver of cordials, and old Griffiths set about some additions to the table and side-board, with the activity of twenty-five.

The company being thus comfortably seated, congratulating each other on the event of the night, were, a second time, alarmed by a voice of female distress: The folding doors were thrown open, and a young girl appeared, tears streaming from her eyes, her hands and face smeared with blood, and dragging in her arms the still bleeding carcass of poor Lion. A sight so new and unexpected, struck them with amazement, particularly the strangers.

“My dear girl,” said Mr. Meredith,
“where have you been, in the joyful confusion
of

of the night I had quite forgot you." "See," said she, sinking under the weight of the dead animal, "see what the strange men have done! O, my dear dear Lion," throwing herself by his side, "what harm had you done to them? you only took care of your own master and mistress, and they have killed you for being better than themselves."

Lion was a great favorite; joy at the arrival of their young master had licensed the intrusion of the servants, regret for the animal, again brought them to the door; an awkward girl, niece to the housekeeper, sometimes maid, sometimes champion, and, oftener, companion to the distressed damsel on the ground, pushed in, and taking the dog in her strong arms, desired the fair mourner to be comforted; for a very good reason, all the crying in the world would not bring Lion to life; and, for her part, she was sure the strangers were negers, for none others would hurt such a harmless creature; and, indeed, she thought Master Lewis might a come to his

his own home, without bringing savage negroes with him." at the end of this speech Winifred Griffiths thought proper to stalk out with the dead animal in her arms, without deigning to cast a look around.

"My dear child," said Lady Meredith, "we are all sorry for poor Lion ; but you must not forget your uncle."

The Lieutenant, though very fond of this young relative, could not help laughing at her appearance, which she observing, retreated behind Sir Arthur's chair, who advised her to go and compose herself, "In the morning," said he, smiling and looking at the blood, "you will not be quite so much in dishabille."

This gentle hint turned her attention to her own figure ; "Gracious !" she exclaimed, and happening to encounter the face of Mac-shean, distended into a broad grin, ran out of the room covered with confusion.

"A very extraordinary young lady this," said the peer, smiling ironically.

"She is a very good girl, my Lord," answered Lady Meredith, "the accident to Lion wholly engrosses her; you will like her better, when you know her more."

"Every body likes Ellen," said Sir Arthur.

"Your grand-daughter, I presume?"

Lady Meredith bowed.

"Lion was the largest of his kind," continued his Lordship, "I ever knew to be a lady's favorite."

"His appearance, it must be confessed, was a little formidable," answered the Surgeon.

"I expected him at my throat," returned the Peer.

"I dare say, my Lord," said Miss Meredith, gravely advancing, "you took him for some miscreant Knight in disguise?"

"Madam!"

“Madam!”

“I say, my Lord, I presume your prowess would not have been exerted against the poor dog, had you believed him to have been a dog; but, as Code Gwyn has certainly the air of an enchanted castle, and Lion was so uncourteous, it was natural for you to conclude he was some disguised enemy; I am extremely concerned your arms, which have, doubtless, been bright in conquest, should be disgraced by so ignoble a subject; I heartily rejoice, however, the deed was done with pistols, which are, indeed, weapons fit only for the canine race; your bright sword, my Lord, which I make no doubt you have often drawn in defence of virtuous damsels, and renowned knights, remain unsoiled by a mean contest.”

“Madam!” repeated his Lordship in astonishment.

Miss Meredith had made her speech, and retired to her seat.

When

When the reader knows how famous Lord Claverton was for 'rescuing "virtuous damsels," and what reason he had to admire "valorous Knights," they will account for the entire change of countenance Miss Meredith's absurd speech produced; he complained of indisposition, wished to retire, and, with a cold determined air declined partaking of the supper, which was setting on the table; the surgeon offered to attend him, but his services were rejected; the valet was summoned, and so *exit* my Lord.

Perhaps a happier set never met than the supper party this night at Code Gwyn: Lewis sat between Sir Arthur and my Lady; Catherine rested her arms on the table, while she defended her address to Lord Claverton against the good-natured attacks of Mr. Meredith, whose romantic turn, though he knew he could not cure, he wished to curb. Doctor Macshean was *now* listening to Miss Agnes's process of making distilled waters, *now* saying civil things to Mary, and *now* drinking bumper

bumper after bumper of Welch ale to Sir Arthur, and his messmate's health; and we must confess, the Baronet and his son pledged him until it was time for the ladies to retire.

CHAP. II.

LORD Claverton's ill humour was not lessened by the morning's reflections; he, very charitably, consigned Code Gwyn and its inhabitants to the devil; and cursing their outré civility, made two resolutions before he rose from the bed of down, which, for neatness and comfort, might repose a Prince. First then, he recollected several circumstances it was no longer agreeable to remember, such as acts, innumerable, of kindness from Lieutenant Meredith, and which, therefore, having

having no further use for, it would be convenient to bury in oblivion. To break, therefore, with the hospitable family, under whose roof, he was at that moment enjoying comforts, he which to had long been a stranger, was, resolution the first. And, secondly, to leave Code Gwyn, and all its horrid inhabitants, the most disgusting of whom, was the awkward girl and her friend Lion, the instant a carriage could be procured. He had just arranged these important manœuvres, when Mrs. Griffiths bounced into his chamber, and having discovered he was awake, withdrew the window curtains, opened the shutters, and asked if his Lordship was ready for breakfast, which, on account of his sickliness, Miss Agnes had ordered to be sent to his chamber.

“ Sickliness !” returned he.

“ Oh, aye, to be sure, my Lord, you does look very deadly, but our clear air, and goats whey.”—

“ Curse

"Curse your whey, you stupid old devil," interrupted his Lordship, in a kind of inward voice, which, as Mrs. Griffiths was a little hard of hearing, excited her attention, without making her acquainted with his invectives.

"Did your Lordship please to speak?"

"Where is my scoundrel?"

"Where's, what—" The valet at that instant entered. "Oh, Mr. Joseph, your Master wants you." He was followed by two rosy cheeked damsels, carrying each plates of different eatables; three sorts of rolls, buttered and dry toast, biscuits, cakes, eggs and home made sweetmeats; then came Edward Griffiths, with a massy tea equipage of the last century, and after him a straight-haired footman, with a large tea kettle.

"My Lord wants something, I cannot make out what, to be sure, poor gentleman, his lungs be infected."

"Are

"Are you laying in provisions for a siege?" cried Lord Claverton, in a maze, as he viewed the breakfast.

"Dear me! my Lord," answered the old housekeeper, officiously arranging the tea-board, and smiling exultingly, "Peace and Plenty, that's our way at Code Gwyn."

"Are the whole family coming here to breakfast?"

"Here! oh dear, no, they be all in the great hall, as merry as grigs, God bless 'em, but here, lord 'tis new year's day; I wish your Lordship a happy new year, if please God to *restore* you.

Lord Claverton's looks testified disgust and impatience. Mrs. Griffiths saw something was the matter, and as she seldom was at the trouble of puzzling herself about causes, stumbled on the one most mortifying to our Peer.

"Well, well, don't despair; come, to be sure you do look mortal bad, and Miss Agnès

thinks as how you have been poisoned by the blacks, and if so be ~~it~~—”

“Turn the beldame out of the room,” said his Lordship, in a rage he no longer sought to repel.

Joseph was a shrewd fellow, who liked too well the entertainment at Code Gwyn, to venture affronting, on his *own* account, a lady, whose authority in the servants-hall was entire; he saw his Lord was decidedly angry; but Mrs. Griffiths, who began to suspect the same thing, had not the most distant idea of the cause; her preceding the breakfast into his chamber; her remarks on his bad looks, and prayer for their amendment, were so many different means of paying her court to a Lord, and obeying Miss Agnes, who had particularly charged her over night, to mind and credit their mutual management in the morning repast, she had no apprehension *she* could have given offence, it was therefore *her* turn to look amazed. Joseph beckoned, nodded, and winked in vain. To be turned
out

out of a room, or be spoken hastily to, was perfectly new to Mrs. Griffiths, who, with the garrulous propensity of old age, blended such an unaffected goodness of heart, such an eagerness to enter into the misfortunes of every being, for the sake of alleviating; as well as talking of them; she had passed from Lady Meredith's pretty *young* waiting maid, to the deaf old housekeeper, in an unimpeached gradation of honesty and affection: In short, it was not more dangerous to rouse *Lion* than affront her—she ejaculated, “Deliver me, good Lord!”

“Get out of the room, you canting old hypocrite,” roared Lord Claverton.

“*You a Lord!*” said the old Lady, with bitter emphasis, and she stalked slowly out of the chamber, all her cambrian blood mounting to her cheeks, without deigning to look one way or the other.

“This moment get me a carriage; let me get out of this infernal family.”

We have said what were his Lordship's resolutions, but it was not to be. The snow had fallen so heavy in the night, the road over the mountains was impassable; no carriage could be got nearer than ten miles, and it was not safe to venture even a horse, as the wind set, the snow drifting against the side of a declivity, by which they must pass, in their way to England. So unaccountable was the aversion Lord Claverton had taken to Code Gwyn, that could the journey be undertaken with any thing less than *personal* danger, it would not have been delayed; but ill health, change of climate, the heat he had left, the cold he had to encounter, contributed to reconcile him to the warm room, which he resolved to leave as little as possible, while he was compelled to stay: He had just sent away half a dozen plates of provision, and set down to his coffee, when the Surgeon and Lieutenant paid him the compliments of the morning.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the prudential resolves which an hour before, were the result of his pillow cogitations, he did not think proper to commence his operations, when it was uncertain how long he might remain under the roof he despised, but his invincible dislike to the whole family, determined him to make his indisposition an excuse for avoiding their society—he had the head-ach, his nerves were shattered, he could not bear conversation: He had in *reality*, been often attacked in this way before he embarked for England, it was therefore, no unnatural conclusion, that his complaints were returned, the Lieutenant very good humouredly offered to sit in his chamber, though he added, that his mother made a great point, of his accompanying her to church.

“To church!” cried Lord Claverton, staring.

“Just so, my Lord,” answered Dr. Macshean, “though it is three miles off, and the snow two foot deep.”

"Oh, pray go to church," said Lord Claverton, ironically, "I hope all the curious set will follow."

The Lieutenant, a little piqued, assured him, that excepting those necessary to attend on his Lordship, and his father, the whole *family would follow.*

Lord Claverton knew what was right, tho' he seldom condescended to act up to that knowledge, and apologized; he, however, would not accept of the company of either of his fellow travellers, but insisted on their obeying orders. They had not been gone five minutes, when Joseph, who had the gift of penetrating his Lordship's disposition, in a very superior degree, and consequently understood the Code Gwyn family were objects of his contempt, came in, with a satyrical grin on his face, to beg his Lordship would go into the gallery, and see the old family cart take *up its load.*

"The

“The gallery! where the devil’s that?”

Joseph opened a door opposite to the one they entered from the stair-case into a long gallery, furnished with a great number of old portraits, with a very large painted bow window at the further end, which served only to make “*darkness visible*.”

More for exercise, than curiosity, Lord Claverton stalked down, but instead of troubling himself about the family *coat*, as Joseph so wittily termed the coach, was returning, when, through the gloom at the farther end, he saw a door open, and a form approach, which his warm imagination likened to the houries of Mahometan Paradise.

It was a slim elegant female, dressed in a callico jacket and coat, short enough to discover a beautiful turned ankle, open at the neck, and arms as white as snow, a profusion of light brown hair in natural ringlets, shaded her alabaster forehead, a pair of lovely brows.

and lashes, two shades darker, gave her clear blue eyes a hazle cast, her features were more beautiful than regular, her lips of the deepest rose pink, half open, displayed a set of small white teeth, her complexion pure and elegant, and her form a model of symmetry ; she tript along the gallery, tying on a straw hat, and was followed by a short thick black eyed girl, carrying a white dimity cloak and a pair of mittens.

Lord Claverton was struck — such a creature to be an inhabitant of that dark dungeon ! his ardent gaze as she drew near raised a crimson glow over the most lovely face and fairest neck he had ever seen — she courtesied and went on.

“ What a Hebe ! ” exclaimed the Peer :

“ Her name is Ellen,” quoth the waiting damsel, also courtesying, and passed on.

Lord

Lord Claverton having followed the fair vision, as he was half inclined to think her, with his eyes, hastily returned to the bow window to see if it made any part of the loading Joseph described. She was lifted up the step, light as a Gossamer, by Lewis Meredith, the carriage drove very slowly off, but Lord Claverton's eyes were rivetted to the spot. Joseph was at hand and as penetrating as ever.

“Shall I make any enquiries about that young lady, my Lord?”

“This moment.”

Joseph descended to the servants hall, Lord Claverton returned to his chamber, the face, shape, complexion; and innocence, he met in the gallery, still before his eyes. Joseph soon returned with a meaning face. It was the identical young lady whose warm embraces, though they might animate a statue, failed to recall the mastiff to life, and her maid, the same civil being, who had bestowed on his Lordship the epithet of neger.

Lord Claverton had lived some years abroad, his connexions were a *little* among the fallow beauties, whom Pluto tempted to abandon their country and health together, and a *great deal* among their wretched slaves, the face of every young woman he had seen since his arrival in Britain, appeared therefore to advantage, but *this girl* was beyond any thing he remembered in his connexions even before he left England; very ignorant, and indeed foolish, the tears she shed for her dog evinced her, but no matter, he should have the less trouble in getting her, which if he liked her as well at the next interview, he was resolved upon. 'Tis true, beautiful as Ellen was, it was the beauty of a tall child; but neither did *that matter*, it was a fault every day would mend.

"Joe, said the noble Lord, I'll have that girl." (Joe thought as much from the moment he met her in the gallery) "Therefore (picking his teeth) do you contrive to know every thing about her."

"Her maid is so cursed ugly! my Lord."

"That's your affair, I shall only keep the Mistress—Damn it, I wish I had not been so ill this morning."

"To be sure, my Lord, that is a pity, because you cannot possibly leave your room to-day, and the family —"

"Oh, curse the family, don't talk of *them*, but, d'ye hear, you may get acquainted with the old beldame."

Joe promised to do his best and my Lord's impatience soon sent him on his honorable mission. Meanwhile his Lordship very deliberately began to lay the plan of his future establishment, in which, however, he considered it as *too* great an honor for a little country rustic to be included, and therefore intended to keep her for his hours of relaxation, in a small box, near the metropolis.

It was thus the noble Peer contrived to elude the enemy while the *simple* Knight, under whose hospitable roof he was entertained, not being able to go to church, read

the lessons of the day to Mr. Griffiths, and while his as simple family were asking the blessing of the Being they served on the new year, a custom still adhered to in many parts of antient Britain.

The return from over-sea of the son of a beloved chief, was news too interesting to his tenants and neighbours to be concealed; it had spread over the Parish with the addition that Master Lewis brought home with him a Lord, and another great man, who would unquestionably be at church with the family on so great a festival as New Year's Day. The folly of these ignorant people was pardonable, since it was impossible *they* could conceive how little respect the lords and great men of the world pay even to the Sabbath day:

But although the peasants waded through the snow, some to say their prayers, others to see the strangers, a lord was not the very strangest sight they had ever seen, for there actually was at that time a nobleman, who resided, from June 'till February
every

every year, at his Castle, within three miles of Code Gwyn church, and though a lord is a Lord every where, they are not, we presume, all exactly alike; the Lord of Castle Howel for Instance, was (as reported) a cross, proud, reserved, old man; whereas, him at Code Gwyn was, if not young, much younger, and moreover, had come from beyond sea with Sir Arthur's son, who was well remembered to be the best hearted, best tempered youth in the world, and who, as they had been constant hearers of all his dangers, either from his own letters or the weekly papers, which Sir Arthur read to them, was expected, if he escaped the perils of the sea, to be a second Benbow, or Matthews at least, two of the greatest Admirals they had ever heard of.

Code Gwyn Church was crowded, and a general bustle in the congregation, with whispers that hissed through the aisles, saluted the young officer as he led his mother to the pew, followed by Dr. Macsheat, his sisters, and niece, This had scarce subsided, and
Mr.

Mr. Meredith mounted the pulpit, before a second object of curiosity, and wonder appeared, in the person of a lady of the *haut ton*, whose chariot wheels had rattled the few villagers who were *not* at church into consternation, and whose dress, (the extremity of the fashion) free step, and undaunted manner, had the same effect on those who were.

Lady Margaret Howel very rarely visited any place of worship, but being, to her infinite mortification, confined to the dull mansion of Castle Howel, and having heard of the arrival of the Lieutenant and his friends, came to Code Gwyn church, in hopes to see something human in the shape of man. Up then tripped Lady Margaret to Sir Arthur's pew, and astonished Macsheat with the ease of her fashionable courtesy—"Who," said he, in a whisper to Catherine, "is that old lady?"

"Old Lady," replied Catherine, "she would deem you a very uncourteous knight to call her so; she is a spinster of great fashion, has read very little."

The service began, Macshead's observations were full of matter: Lady Margaret's rolling *grey* eyes often encountered his more penetrating black ones, and those she saw, did not indicate any of that cold reserve, which had frozen her sensibility in the parson, who, sometime back, she condescended to think tolerable.

Lady Margaret had an entire aversion to her family name, and finding her small fortune an insurmountable objection to any exchange, was taking great pains to remove it, by accumulations, at her brother's expence, and had it already in her power, amply to reward the kindness of any gentleman who should assist her in converting Lady Margaret Howel into Lady Margaret any thing else.

Macshead was the younger son of a reduced Scotch family, poor, dependent, and excepting his patron the Peer, (for whom, by the bye, he had not the most profound respect) friendless, he had been taught by many

a bitter lesson of experience, the art of accommodating himself to the whims and caprices, and even tyranny of *others*, when his own disposition, with power, would have qualified him to be as whimsical, capricious, and tyrannical, as the *best*. Lady Margaret came to church in an elegant carriage, with two footmen in splendid liveries, and as he perceived, notwithstanding an immoderate bloom on her cheek, she was an old lady with young inclinations, he concluded from her equipage she possessed the *ne plus ultra* of *his* wishes, in consequence, he certainly looked, and said, as many passionate things as the time and place would admit. Lady Margaret, in wonderful good humour, invited herself home with the Code Gwyn family, merely to congratulate Sir Arthur on the arrival of his son, whom she obliged to take a seat in her carriage, and although she had made a thousand protestations against ever venturing on the dangerous side of Castle Howel, *now* condescended to be dragged, step by step, after the
old

old coach, in momentary danger of having her carriage broken, and herself thrown out.

When the great court bell rang, and Lord Claverton strided across the gallery, to steal a glance at the beautiful rustic, he was not a little surprised at recognizing Lady Margaret Castle Howel, whose face had many years been a fixture at every public place of polite resort; he swore, the old hag had laid her fangs on the Lieutenant, and congratulated himself on his resolution not to stir out of his apartment; but a quick foot ascending the stair, soon made him regret every moment passed in it.

Ellen, more beautiful from the glow which air and exercise left on her cheek, her hair disordered by the wind, the smile of content dimpling round her mouth, and her natural beauty increased by the happiness the arrival of the Lieutenant diffused in the family, gaily tripped to her apartment, followed by her faithful shadow Winifred, and again dropped

dropped a courtesy to his Lordship as she passed.

“Heavens! what an object for attention—for admiration—for ruin.”

His eyes followed 'till she was lost at the farther extremity of the gloomy gallery, when he retired slowly to his room.

CHAP. III.

GOOD humour and conviviality now reigned in every part of Code Gwyn House, save that where his Lordship was honorably agitated by feelings not altogether new, though more violent than he had lately experienced. The ease with which he had a minute before settled the business vanished, difficulties

difficulties innumerable presented themselves to his imagination, but it is the province of daring minds to overcome difficulties — by daring I do not mean bravery, no ; there is a fort of resolution, more bold than bravery ; more persevering than courage ; more witty than wise ; more pliant than good humour — of this fort was the daring of Lord Claverton : The girl he was resolved to have, but how that glorious point was to be accomplished ; how a mind formed in the very bosom of purity was to be corrupted ; how, after succeeding, to escape the sober dignified resentment of Mr. Meredith, or the passionate revenge of the young officer, for the breach of every law of hospitality, were points that began to puzzle him.

A boiled chicken and white soup, which Mrs. Griffiths pronounced proper for a *sick body*, was served, and sent back untouched, on which, as loss of appetite was, in her opinion, the *greatest*, if not *only* sign of danger, she very gravely presented herself at the elbow

bow of Lady Meredith, and assured her, the Lord, above stairs, was in a very bad way.

Lady Margaret's warm congratulations, her politeness to the Lieutenant, and her condescension to every body, had quite eclipsed Lord Claverton; and, as to Mr. Macnean, *he* was as deeply engaged in laying plans, as his Lordship himself could possibly be, and with more probability of success; he by this time understood, Lady Margaret was the only sister of the Earl of Castle Howel; he saw, notwithstanding a vast deal of powder, she was grey; and a vast deal of rouge, she was ugly; but it was a desirable thing to be related to an old Earl, and a very undesirable one to be dependent on a profligate Peer, he therefore "sighed and looked." But deeply engaged as his externals were in besieging Lady Margaret, and as his internals were in arranging every advantage therefor, he did not forget the possibility of a disappointment. The instant Mrs. Griffiths mentioned his Lordship's illness, he arose from table with an
apologizing

apologizing bow, and hastened to his patron, followed by the Lieutenant.

Lord Claverton was in so profound a reverie, that the Doctor began a florid apology before he perceived they were in the room; the sight of the Lieutenant, however, restored the invalid to his usual presence of mind, and "Ha! Lewis, how are you?" with a smile, that proved he had not taken offence, and an animation of countenance, that also evidenced nearer approach to convalescence than he had yet observed, set the Doctor's mind at rest. In short, it was one part of his Lordship's present scheme to be wonderfully good humoured; he attributed his want of appetite to confinement, determined on a reform, and, being most cordially invited, actually condescended to join the happy party below.

Lady Margaret, whose tedious years had rolled insipidly on between London and Castle Howel, perfectly remembered Captain, now
Lord

Lord Claverton, and, as I have before said, Lord Claverton knew her Ladyship, they were, or professed to be, very happy at so unexpected a rencontre; their mutual congratulations kept the company standing, to the great edification of the domestics, who were fixed in open-mouthed admiration, 'till Sir Arthur from his wheel-chair interrupted the fine breeding of his quality guests.

"Set a chair here," said he, pointing to his right hand, "My Lord, you are welcome." The benevolent smile, the sincere look, and cordial shake of the hand, dressed the *welcome* in nature's most attractive garb; truth, honesty, and inbred politeness, graced every action of Sir Arthur Meredith.

"Frankness in him was not the effect of familiarity, but the cause of it," he was a gentleman of *god's making*. Lord Claverton took the offered seat with more pleasure, as on part of the goury stool, at her grandfather's feet, her blue eyes raised to his, with a mixture

mixture of love and reverence, sat the blooming Ellen.

There were present, who annually dined at Code Gwyn, on New Year's Day, besides the guests we have named, Mr. James, the Surgeon, Apothecary, Man-Midwife, and Physician of the village, Mr. Percival Evelyn, a youth of eighteen, an eleve of the rector's, and John Morgan, Esq. Lord of the next Manor, before introduced to the reader, as the convenient money-lending friend of Sir Arthur Meredith, a gentleman who will make a conspicuous figure in the events of this history, and who will gradually unfold his own character, I shall therefore only say, few men addressed their superiors with more servility, or treated his equals with more apparent frankness and plausibility, which was indeed extended to such of his inferiors as were not dependent on or in debt to him; these sort of people he made in every sense feel *their own* littleness, and *his* consequence: he was a perfect adept in the whole art of bowing, and managed

managed the bend of his body according to the rank or riches of those he addressed, with an exactitude that would have done honor to Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant himself—to every branch of the Code Gwyn family Esquire Morgan bowed particularly low, to Lord Claverton and Lady Margaret Howel still lower.

His *Lordship's* eyes were fixed on Ellen; Esquire Morgan perceived she was grown tall, and prodigiously improved, he drank Sir Arthur's health, and a happy new year, in a glass of ale, which he declared he preferred to Champagne.

"Who is this gentleman?" whispered Macsheatan to Miss Meredith.

"He is the dæmon of avarice!" replied she, "and owns the great house on the hill; he buys every body's estates, and lives in a corner of his own mansion."

Macshean

Macshean knew enough of the world to be certain it was not worth his while to take a look from Lady Margaret to bestow on John Morgan, Esquire.

The good humour of the company was increased by the addition to their society, the Lieutenant rallied his sisters on their being old maids ; Miss Meredith gloried in the title, rather than unite herself to any man who had not atchieved some great adventure, and given proofs both of valour and love.

'Squire Morgan called the young man to order, he declared the ladies were all too young to fall under that odium ; he was warmly seconded by Mr. Macshean, who had his doubts whether a woman of twice Miss Meredith's age could be properly called an old maid ; a woman, who could feel and inspire the tender passion, was not surely of that description ; there *were women*, & me of whom he had the honor to *know*, who had passed the childhood of their days, but who were still

objects of desire, and more worthy the attachment of rational beings than it was possible a mere girl could be.

Three persons, and three only of the company fully comprehended Mr. Macsheat—these were Lady Margaret, Lord Claverton, and 'Squire Morgan, the latter bowing very low to her Ladyship, replied, “exce signum.”

When the ladies retired, the noble invalid attended them, and the Rector's young eleve, who appeared to be quite at home, after helping Ellen to adjust Sir Arthur's cushion, followed her into the drawing room.

Percival Evelyn was too handsome and too attentive to Ellen, to escape Lord Claverton's notice; the plainness of his dress, his unobtrusive manners, the blush that crimsoned his naturally pale interesting face, when called on to give his sentiments by the Rector, the diffidence and bashfulness that accompanied all his actions, shewed him a very despicable

despicable rival, but a rival his Lordship feared he certainly was, and was therefore particularly watchful of both Ellen and him.

The night being very cold and dark, Lady Margaret was prevailed on to accept the second best room ; cards and the gentlemen appeared together, but the harp in the hall was a more welcome summons to the younger part, and even Lord Claverton would dance if Ellen would be his partner.

Whether it was the disaster of her dead favorite, which Winifred did not fail to remind her of ; whether his Lordship was a bad partner, or from what other cause, certainly this arrangement did not particularly please Ellen ; she was, however, so fond of dancing, the gloom vanished by degrees, she chatted, sung, and laughed herself so completely into Lord Claverton's heart, that before they parted for the night it had struck him, a little polish would render her fit to grace his Peerage.

The education of Ellen had indeed been extraordinary; she had learnt to read of the Rector, to write of his Clerk, to dance of old Griffiths, to sing and play of the family Harper, and to ride of the Bailiff: In this exercise she was so expert, that it was common for her maid Winifred and herself to catch a horse on the mountain, no matter whose, and gallop two or three miles without bridle or saddle; she was very famous for discovering birds nests, and minded not any height to get at them; ready to follow any body's hounds through thick and thin, and was even an excellent shot. With all these accomplishments she was now but in her fifteenth year, with the face of Venus, the form of Diana, and the greatest romp in the world; yet the natural sense she was blessed with, the example of Lady Meredith and her daughters, the sentiments she imbibed from them, and the constant practice of every virtue, even in her unpolished state of nature, rendered her artless conversation charming and entertaining.

To

To his Lordship's great joy she was evidently entertained by the glowing picture of London, he contrived to mix in his conversation; but he could not, with all his art, extort one wish from her to see or be seen there.

The 'Squire took his leave at a late hour, and the company separated, apparently delighted with each other.

CHAP. IV.

AT breakfast, the three persons, bent on conquest, met with all possible advantage; Lady Margaret gave a formal invitation to all present to spend that day week at Castle Howel; Lord Claverton having found *prodigious benefit* from the *air*, no longer talked of a *sudden removal*.

Mr. Macsheat and the Lieutenant attended Lady Margaret on horseback, and were introduced to the Earl of Castle Howel; when her Ladyship, with unusual volubility, dis-canted on the present happiness of the Code Gwyn family, explained the reasons she chose to assign for her visit there, protested they were the best creatures in the world, and that she was particularly indebted to the politeness of the two gentlemen who escorted her home.

The Earl bowed to each: Lady Margaret lamented living so long in the neighbourhood without having cultivated such agreeable society; she had engaged them to spend a day at Castle Howel.

The Earl bowed again, and Lady Margaret having opened her scheme, was silent, considering on the next step towards completing her conquest over the irresistible Macsheat, for so he now appeared to her warm imagination.

Mr.

Mr. Macsnean, who was always upon the watch for any thing that might be eventually advantageous, attempted to enter into conversation; but a grave bow, or a single monosyllable, was all he could gain from the Earl, and perceiving his Lordship was totally indifferent to whatever subject was started, and that Lady Margaret looked restless and dissatisfied, while the Lieutenant was attentively examining some fine charts of the sea coast, which hung over the chimney, he arose, and casting a languishing look at her Ladyship, and most profoundly bowing to the Earl, asked the Lieutenant if he would go.

The sailor was on his hobby-horse, he loved his profession, and every thing appertaining to it interested him. The Earl was not so abstracted but he could see the young man was uncommonly pleased; he patronized the artist who published the charts, and gratified at so unequivocal a mark of approbation, from one who must be a professional judge of their merit, invited him to his dress-

ing-room, where he had another set, by the same hand.

Here was a golden opportunity, which Macsheat did not suffer to escape. The windows overlooked a rich prospect of land, wood and water; ease and affluence seemed the natural inhabitants of this magnificent castle; the ornaments and furniture were superb, there was even an air of contented grandeur in the livery of the servants; and Lady Margaret, the Medea who had the clue to this golden fleece: could a lover, a poor lover, and a scotch lover! be less than eloquent? What Mr. Macsheat said, or what he did, we leave our readers to imagine from their own feelings.

The Earl of Castle Howel was, at the period this history commences, in his fiftieth year; he had, in his youth, disobliged his father, by marrying the beautiful daughter of an obscure Attorney, in London, who he accidentally saw in the street, and following home, became so enamoured of her, that he considered

considered all other blessings of life as mere trifles in comparison of the possession of her. It however frequently happens, that the wisest of frail mortals are so little able to decide on the right road to happiness, that they take the exact opposite ; of this the Honorable Mr. Howel was an instance : He offended his father, and all his noble relations, by marrying Miss Capus, of Spital-Fields, and after Miss Capus had been one month looked up to as the Honorable Mrs. Howel, he discovered he had mortally offended her, by raising her out of the reach of a smart young man, who officiated as clerk to her father, and who had indeed entirely forestalled Mr. Howel in the possession of his fair bride's person and affection.

The reader will expect the consequences : Mr. Howel was dependent on a stern obstinate father ; Miss Capus would not be the Honorable Mrs. Howel for nothing ; if she might not have the splendour of an Earl's

D 5 daughter,

daughter, she might as well have staid in Spital-Fields, with her father's clerk.

Too charming to be without admiration, and too vain to be displeased at exciting it, her acquaintance became very general, and very suspected; for some little time Mrs. Howel could dress and shew with the most expensive, without any visible fund to support her fine taste: Mr. Howel was the first who chose to make enquiries into so strange a matter, he was followed by the whole beau monde; these indeed were better and sooner informed, but a very little time returned the fair bride to Spital-Fields, and her father's clerk. Mr. Howel had proofs enough of her ill conduct to obtain a divorce, but he had taken a disgust to the sex, and resolved never to marry again, and as he became indolent and careless in the matter, it dropped of course.

A few years, however, rendered the legal divorce of importance; his two elder brothers

thers died, the honors and estates of Castle Howel were entailed on the male heir, the next in succession after Mr. Howel was a person, who had rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the family, and it was a very serious matter with the old Earl and two maiden sisters, Lady Frances, and Lady Gertrude Howel, to disappoint his expectations.

The Earl of Castle Howel's express found his son in a remote corner of Switzerland, studying Botany. He received the news with great philosophy, and returned to England by easy stages, within two months after he was expected.

The first business that engrossed the old Earl, and his two sisters, was that of settling the divorce, and fixing on a proper person to bring an heir into the family.

His son was, on his part, no less engaged in planning and laying out a piece of ground for botanical experiments.

The divorce could not be obtained ; the time had elapsed ; one witness was dead, another not to be found, and the lady-wife, by experience had become cautious ; the Earl was grieved, the two noble spinsters outrageous, and Lord Howel pursued his botanical experiments.

Lord Howel succeeded his father in title and estate, but his aunts, who were rich, retired to an estate they had in the North of England ; the Earl died intestate and insolvent ; Lady Margaret, his only surviving daughter, received a cold invitation to accompany her aunts to the North, but she had sense enough to observe, that while her father, who played high, kept race horses, and was at the head of every fashionable expence, out-lived his income, her aunts were making the very *most* of his brotherly affection ; from them she imbibed a laudable regard to the grand movement of all our actions, *self interest*, and wisely resolved to continue with a brother, whose situation was a security against his marrying,
and

and abstracted turn of mind left her sovereign mistress of his house; she therefore declined, under the plea of sisterly regard, her aunts invitation; the force of that plea they perfectly comprehended, and gave her prudence due credit.

The ladies departed on civil terms with their nephew and niece, having extorted a promise from the former, that as soon as it was possible to get legally rid of his wife, he would marry some young woman, and make them all happy in the long desired addition to the family; on their part engaging his male heir should be theirs also.

Lord Castle Howel had many antediluvian notions of honor about him; he inherited Castle Howel estate entail, no debt of his father's was binding on him, but he considered he had long lived with comfort to himself on 200l. per annum, he was now in the receipt of 20000l. the debts of the Earl, including those of honor, amounted to sixty thousand; these

these debts he considered as part of his inheritance, and appropriated one-third of his income to pay off principal and interest, which reduced his rent-roll to 14000. The apathy of his disposition was not removed by excess of fortune, but innate honesty of heart predominated so far, as to bring him to his closet once a week, for the first year, to arrange his expences according to his ideas of filial honor, and having so arranged them, he resigned the command of his family to his sister, taking her vouchers, for the general disbursements, while he amused himself with botanical and philosophical experiments, and patronizing genius wherever he met it.

Mondays, during the season, the huntsmen, with a fine pack of dogs, were in the field, and usually collected a large company of plain country 'squires, for whose entertainment there was a public dinner; but as *their* general conversation neither suited Lord Castle Howel, nor Lord Castle Howel *theirs*; and as Lady Margaret was neither handsome nor rich, few
visitors,

visitors, except on hunting days, troubled Castle Howel.

Lady Margaret, though doomed nine months of the year to this insipid vegetation, passed the other three more to her taste; they had a house in Grosvenor-Street, and her Ladyship was among the leaders of the high ton, she was constantly in the circle, had a box at the opera, patronized the fashionable favourites of either theatre, was a subscriber to all the music meetings, had her Sunday concerts and assemblies; in short, as the old song says, "Wherever a fiddle was heard she was there," but year after year elapsing with equal sameness, without one offer of marriage, was a terrible drawback on her enjoyments; she had long persuaded herself it was want of fortune that deprived her of the attentions she saw paid to older ladies than herself, and as long had been endeavouring to remedy the evil.

The

The Earl's family were thus situated, when a certain honest peculiarity of manners, and a blunt freedom of address, added to an uncommon good-humoured set of features, interested his Lordship in favor of Lieutenant Meredith, and gave Doctor Macshead an opportunity to breathe his passion at the feet of Lady Margaret.

Dinner was announced before either of the *tet  -  -t   * parties were up, and before the visitors made their bow, Lord Castle Howel joined Lady Margaret's invitation to be better acquainted.

CHAP. V.

MEANWHILE the hours passed at Code Gwyn with little satisfaction to Lord Claverton, his affairs went on in rather a retrograde

trograde motion, though he had done so much violence to his polite nature, as to sacrifice two whole hours to the back-gammon table with Sir Arthur, had listened to a favorite rhapsody from Clelia, by Miss Meredith, admired the œconomy of her sister, and read three long letters from Lucretia to Amantus : Ellen and her maid Winifred, insensible to both cause and effect of such great humiliation, had strolled away to the parsonage, and it was dark before she returned ; her absence, when he found she did not appear at the dinner table, took away the little appetite he had, and his chagrin got the better of even his consummate art ; he asked, with feigned indifference, if Miss Ellen had accompanied Lady Margaret ?

“ Oh ! ” replied the old Baronet, “ this is too fine a day for Ellen to be at home, she will return as blooming as a rose : Have you seen her ? ” addressing Mr. Meredith. “ No,” answered he, “ but I dare say Percival has ; I suppose they are together.”

Lord

Lord Claverton coloured, and removed from table really unwell; the facility with which he had planned to seduce the young beauty was no more; not that a single scruple as to the means necessary to be employed troubled him; no, it was his observations on Ellen herself, and a rising jealousy of the tall awkward youth, whom one moment he despised, and the next feared, that disturbed him.

A long series of ill health, the consequences of early irregularities and a hot climate, entirely pervaded the nervous system of Lord Claverton, the least opposition to his passions both irritated and weakened him, he was on the present occasion therefore, in a very unenviable state; he retired to his chamber, and was joined by Doctor Macsheat, so much worse, that *he* talked of medicine, but was interrupted by his Lordship's impatient inquiry of, "who was below?"

"In

“In troth,” replied the Doctor, “my Lord, I was so alarmed at the account I heard —”

Lord Claverton turned pale, “Account! what has happened, is Ellen returned?”

Had his Lordship sent for Dr. Macsheat on purpose to make him the full confidant of what passed in his mind; had he taken the utmost pains to elucidate every present sensation, and minutely explained every future intention, the wary Doctor could not have been let more fully into his patron’s secrets, than by the voice and manner which accompanied the simple interrogation. —

“Is Ellen yet returned?”

Dr. Macsheat immediately seated himself, and improving on this unguarded lapse, was in five minutes invested with as much authority, as prime agent to Lord Claverton, as he himself chose to accept; that is to say, Lord Claverton did not propose, nor did Dr. Macsheat

Macfhean hint at the seduction of the girl; each party understood the other too well, to be so much in either's power; but the friendship of his Lordship to the Meredith family, and his particular liking of the pretty Ellen, on account of her *innocence* and *vivacity*, might certainly inspire a wish to serve and a blameless desire of knowing every thing that concerned *her*, and the Doctor might engage to gratify such his patron's wish and desire, without the least reflection on his own *moral* character.

Lord Claverton and his friend had yet the tea cups before them, when Ellen's voice warbling a welch air, as she passed the gallery, gave the welcome information of her return, and as the Peer's spirits were immediately above par, he proposed joining the family.

'Squire Morgan, whose business at Code Gwyn became every day more frequent, was in the parlour, and Lieutenant Meredith having

ing amused his father, and gratified his mother, with an account of Lord Castle Howel's particular goodness to *him*; the instant Lord Claverton entered, the 'Squire took occasion to congratulate the family on the acquisition of *two* such noble friends as the Earl, and (bowing very low) Lord Claverton.

As Ellen undesignedly drew her chair between her grandfather and the Peer, he was in high good humour, and appeared to listen so attentively to the long stories Sir Arthur loved to tell, ~~she~~, for the first time looked at him with attention; the pale and languid, though handsome countenance of a Lord, who seemed to like her dear grandfather, and who, the 'Squire most humbly insinuated, might essentially serve her uncle, the Lieutenant, interested her; after a steadfast observance, which, though he affected to be wholly engrossed by the long story, did not escape his Lordship, she pleased and surprised him by an address, in which softness and sympathy were blended.

“How

"How do you find yourself this evening, my Lord? Griffiths said you were worse."

In spite of all his art the blood mounted to his cheek; the Doctor's looks encountered his Patron's, and both concluded matters were en train.

'Squire Morgan, without seeming to dare to raise his eyes to Lord Claverton, or to attend to any thing but the long story, which he had heard, at least, one hundred times before, had *his* observations too, but he concealed them in a low bow, and took his leave.

Winifred Griffiths was an ill made girl, not yet eighteen, with black hair, eyes, and eyebrows, short nose, wide mouth, strong white teeth, high cheek bones, and a very fresh colour, spoke very bad English, and worse Welch: Joseph Wilks, however, by his Lord's commands, fell desperately in love with Winifred's beauty, presented her with
two

two handsome silk handkerchiefs, and a pair of silver buckles, and pressed very hard for a promise of marriage.

“Why, as Cot shall save me, Mr. Joseph, your gifts are very good, and you are a very well behaved footman, but my uncle Griffiths will not give me a farthing of fortune if I don’t ask his consent.”

“Fortune! what did his charmer think he valued fortune? No; Joe Wilks would have Winifred Griffiths, if Winifred Griffiths would have Joe Wilks, in spite of her old cross uncle, or his fortune.”

“Ay, Cot knows, cross indeed: But then Miss Ellen; oh, she would not leave Miss Ellen, no, not for all Code Gwyn was worth, and, to be sure, it was the finest, the best, and greatest place in all the world!”

This declaration led to a secret Mr. Joseph wouldn’t tell his fair Winifred, under the *seal of*
secrecy,

secrecy, which was, that as Lord Claverton was as much in love with her mistress, as he was with herself, she might safely promise to marry him, without leaving Miss Ellen.

This point being settled, Winifred very readily folded up the handkerchiefs, put the silver buckles in her shoes, and proudly anticipating the day when Ellen Meredith should be Lady Claverton, promised to marry his footman; the agreement being signed and sealed in the usual way such agreements are commonly signed and sealed between footmen and waiting maids, the parties separated; Winifred to shew her cists and boast of her conquest, to the rest of the maids, keeping, however, her promise of secrecy in regard to her mistress; and Joseph to report to his Lord the progress of his passion.

The day fixed on for the visit to Castle Howel arrived, Ellen begged to stay at home with Sir Arthur, and Lord Claverton was immediately too much indisposed to attend;

Lady Meredith could not press his Lordship, but her pride as well as that of her daughter's was too much gratified by the admiration Ellen always excited, to dispense with her; and Lord Claverton, to his great mortification, had another day to pass, either in his chamber, or at the back-gammon table, as, though he might be very suddenly and dangerously taken *indisposed*, he was too cautious to raise suspicion in the family by a too sudden *recovery*.

Lady Meredith dressed Ellen herself, Miss Catherine adjusted her fine hair, and, indeed, by the uncommon attention of all the ladies, one would be led to believe they had a presentiment of the consequence of that day's visit, to Castle Howel.

Doctor Macfhean was also particularly attentive to *his* dress, and the ladies being ready, he handed them, with great ceremony, to the coach, into which, (as he declined riding on horseback in respect to the dressing

of his very thin, and, in many parts, grey hairs) he also stepped himself.

Edward Griffiths, who always attended Lady Meredith, and two other grey headed servants, followed the old coach, in its sure though slow progress.

As they entered the fine Park, and approached the Castle, by roads kept in the nicest order, Ellen, whose longest journey had been to Code Gwyn church, was charmed with scenes so new; she had never once conceived there was in the world any thing superior to Code Gwyn, where, though the Parks, and all the walks and grounds, spoke too plainly the gradual decay both of the health and property of the venerable owner, there yet remained a superiority and grandeur, so much out of all comparison above what she had seen at the house of 'Squire Morgan, Mr. James, the Apothecary, or any of the opulent farmers in the neighbourhood, that she had not entertained a doubt but Code Gwyn

Gwyn was the finest feat, and Sir Arthur the first gentleman in the world, not excepting Lord Claverton, of whose importance she had, within the last twenty-four hours, by the help of Dr. Macsheat and Winifred Griffith, formed a very high opinion.

Lady Meredith, who had, in her youth, been the companion and friend of the Ladies, Gertrude and Frances Howel, while they resided at the Castle, was revolving as the carriage rumbled slowly on, over the pleasant hours of juvenile hilarity: Miss Catherine could recollect many fine descriptions of Cassandra and Clelia, when the Oroondates and Alexanders had sighed under such shades as those they were passing: Miss Agnes lamented the pasture at Code Gwyn was much inferior to that at Castle Howel: Mary was studying fine sentences to adorn a descriptive letter to her friend, Miss Peggy Jones: and Doctor Macsheat — but it is impossible to delineate the variety of thoughts that occupied his ideas; a marriage into the Earl's
E 2 family

family had so many glittering appendages—one would be first, another would be first, and all would be first—What, however, was rather extraordinary, the fair lady who was the grand mover of all, was not thought of 'till the coach stopped, and he saw her significant smile from the bow window of the drawing-room, then indeed the Doctor saw Lady Margaret, and though he had handed the pretty Agnes into the carriage, and pressed her hand with great gallantry, he now declined any civilities to the younger part of the family, and transferred all his care to Lady Meredith.

Mr. Meredith and the Lieutenant, who rode on horseback, were already with the Earl.

The grand stair-case, the marble hall, gilded ornaments, fine figures, and rich vases, which filled a number of niches as they passed, astonished Ellen, she had not eyes enough to look round, and the rest of the party were introduced

roduced and seated, while she stood at the door, afraid either to advance or retreat, the Earl himself was the first to take notice of the young visitor.

Lord Castle Howel was an enthusiastic admirer of the beauties of nature, his heart had paid homage to one of the finest works of the creation, uncultivated by education and unblest by talent; from her he had retreated with disgust, and the vegetable world next attracted his attention: His misfortune, with respect to his wife, was a continual guard on his passions, his eyes were in subjection to his situation; and though the sublime and beautiful of all descriptions attracted him, he chose to live secluded from temptation, and it was seldom he allowed himself to contemplate the face of a beautiful woman; but one now presented itself, from which he apprehended no danger, where all the charms of modesty and innocence were blended with a something more than beauty.

Impelled by admiration he hastily advanced towards Ellen, took her hand, and led her blushing to Lady Margaret.

"Whose little angel is this?" said he, "How came you not to introduce her?"

Lady Margaret had been too long a sedulous observer of her brother, to mistake any of his actions, she directly saw Ellen would be a favorite, and from that moment she was a little divinity.

Dinner was served with all possible magnificence, and cards introduced but not attended to: Lady Margaret, with all that marked attention which fine-bred women *can* pay, to those on whom they condescend to form designs, won on the unsuspecting heart of Lady Meredith: She presented Miss Meredith with several old Romances out of the library; chatted with Agnes on the merit of domestic economy; and presented Mary with a handsome ebony ink stand, filled with crow pens

pens and french paper : Mr. Meredith admired a fine pointer, Lady Margaret begged it of the Earl for him — In short, she was every thing to every body.

Doctor Macsbean, who hitherto considered only the immediate advantage of his union with Lady Margaret, could not but be pleased with a woman, whose internal policy so exactly corresponded with his own, and whose easy manners and address, at her brother's table, gave his Scotch family pride a pleasing earnest of what she would be at her own, when his visionary castles should be realized, and, by her interest, he should be an established Physician, in the Metropolis, which was the goal of his ambition.

In the mean while Ellen and the Earl were seated on a sofa, at a distance from the rest of the company, the latter too much engaged with his new acquaintance, to attend the manœuvres of his sister.

His heart (torpid as his early disappointment and disgust had rendered it) insensibly warmed to a being, on whose countenance the finger of nature legibly displayed every amiable trait of the human mind — the face of Ellen was a wonder, yet her beauty ceased to attract where her natural bashfulness gave way to frankness and vivacity.

The result of the favorable sentiments she thus artlessly inspired, was an inquiry into her education, and it is difficult to say, whether Lord Castle Howel most regretted her deficiencies in modern accomplishments, or admired her native graces without them; he was far from fatigued when supper put an end to the tête-à-tête, and bid Ellen good night with paternal complacency.

CHAP. VII.

LADY Meredith was amused while undressing, by Ellen's rapturous praises of Lord Castle Howel, he was, she declared, almost as handsome as her grandfather, and quite different from Lord Claverton.

"He is so sweet tempered, Grandmamma, so like my uncle Edmund; and, do you know, he says so many sweet things."

"He is very good, but what does he say?"

"That my uncle Lewes was born to be an Admiral, and that you must have been very handsome when you was young; and indeed I told him, so you are now; and he

said—now what do you think he said? He said, that *I* was like you, but many people have told me that, and when I have looked in the glass, I do think I am."

"Then, my dear, by that rule, you think yourself handsome?"

"Why, yes, Grandmamma, I *do* think my face is handsomer than many people's, there's Winifred's, you know, she has very pretty black eyes, and more colour in her cheek, and yet I think I like my own face best; but now, Grandmamma, only tell me what you think of Percival Evelyn's face, is not his a pretty one?"

"Prettier than your own, Ellen?"

"Oh, yes, a vast deal; his eyes are prettier than Winifred's, or any body's, except my Grandpapa's; and, though he is pale, what a sweet colour he has sometimes; why did he not come with us? I dare say Lord Castle-Howel would have liked him very well,"

"Go to sleep, child, and dream of Lord Castle Howel."

"No, I don't think I shall dream of *him*, but I dare say I shall of Percival."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed, I am always sure to dream of him; and, do you know, Grandmamma, though I am ashamed when he tells me so, he dreams of me too; he told me this morning he dreamed last night that he saw me carried over towers, and high buildings, he was afraid of my falling, and yet he could not get at me, and he said he cried so his pillow was wet: Wasn't it very shocking?"

"Oh, my dear, you must not mind dreams."

"No, I don't mind them, only I thought of Percival, when I saw the top of the Castle this morning."

While Ellen was thus pourtraying her feelings to her venerable parent, Lord Castle Howel was traversing his apartment, and ruminating on the lovely child, whose mind and person promised so much perfection: He was a man of nice honor and great generosity, I have no children, said he, I will adopt her, educate, and bring her into life; she will amuse my heavy hours, and adorn my festive ones; but the world!—the world!——Aye, well, if the censure of the world forbids me to indulge myself in her society, I will educate her *for* the world: and firmly resolving so to do, he went to rest, satisfied with his own intentions towards Ellen and all God's creation.

The morning shewed Lord Castle Howel his fair visitant by day light, for although the hour of dining at Castle Howel and London differed by at least two hours, yet lights must be introduced with the dinner. Ellen was still Ellen, the morning being frosty, she who hailed the rising sun at home, had now been
rambling

rambling out, long before Lady Margaret left her room.

Lord Castle Howel and his young friend were again seated on the sofa, the tête-à-tête of the preceding night was renewed with increased approbation on both sides, and before the Meredith family took leave, the Earl asked Lady Meredith, half joking, if she would give him her grand-daughter, which she, in the same good-humour, promised.

From this period Doctor Macsnean became a regular, though private, visitor, at Castle Howel.

Joseph apprised his Lord of the return of the carriage, who flew with avidity to the hall door to receive Ellen.

Ready for the same service, but too modest to keep his station, when his Lordship appeared, stood Percival Evelyn; the proud
Peer

Peer attempted to look him into contempt, it was, however, but an attempt; for Percival Evelyn, under his rustic bashfulness, had fine natural sense, and great personal courage, and although, by his own humility, Lord Claverton got so far the advantage of him as to receive Ellen from the coach, he resolutely advanced to welcome her home; she extended her hand to him with an air of the most familiar friendship, asked a number of questions, which her vivacity did not give him time to answer, and entirely regardless of Lord Claverton's ill health, of which he complained, or of the intense cold, which she seemed not to feel, stood chatting away 'till reproved by Lady Meredith, when she suffered herself to be led in by the smiling, though inwardly enraged Lord Claverton.

Mr. Meredith, who did not sleep at Castle Howel, was indisposed; a disappointment of the heart in the early part of his life, had extremely injured his health; he was subject to nervous fevers, and billious complaints, which

often confined him, and filled his family with apprehensions for his life : He usually left the rectory on the first symptoms of an attack, but Lord Claverton's stay rendered Code Gwyn less desirable, and less convenient than his own house, and Percival was now come to fetch Miss Meredith, who, with all her romance, was his favorite sister.

The conversation of the preceding night dwelt on Lady Meredith's mind ; Percival Evelyn, she, for the first time discovered, was too much in Ellen's thoughts ; *his* expectations were moderate indeed ! Ellen's no less so ; together they must be wretched, separate each might be fortunate : These reflections occurred to Lady Meredith, during her ride home, and the impropriety of suffering two amiable young people, partial to each other, to be in the same house, with their feelings engrossed by the same object, also occurred, while Ellen pleaded, with great eloquence both of speech and look, the necessity of somebody's accompanying her aunt, in the
care

care of her dear uncle; but a grave negative, from Lady Meredith, silenced and disconcerted her.

The next morning Lady Meredith went to visit her son alone; this was the second real sorrow Ellen had ever felt, and as it was an unusual deprivation of indulgence without a consciousness of offence, that sorrow was blended with some little resentment.

Winifred happened to be also in great trouble; she had unfortunately burnt a sheet of paper, wrote all over by Amantis to Lucretia, giving a full and particular account of the visit to Castle Howel; and, in running out of the way of Mary, who was a little of the vixen, struck Sir Arthur's gouty foot in such a manner, as to excite anger in the bosom of meekness itself. Lady Meredith recommended it to Mrs. Griffiths to punish her for her carelessness, and forbid her to appear in her sight. Winifred's sorrow was always boisterous, and, her disgrace happening while Mr. Joseph

Joseph was present, was such an aggravation, that the servants'-hall echoed with her injuries. Ellen went hastily to enquire what could occasion such violent exclamations of grief.

Winifred no sooner beheld her young mistress with tears in *her* eyes, than all her own cares vanished.

“As Cot shall pless me, Miss Ellen, you have been crying your eyes out, vat the tivil is the matter fith my lady?”

Ellen was sure she did not know, but she was very cross.

Winifred believed the tivil himself had got his cloven foot among them.

Mistress and maid being united in one cause, were proceeding to Ellen's room, to unbosom, when, in the gallery, they were met by Lord Claverton, who very anxiously enquired of Mr. Meredith's health.

This

This was the right key.

Ellen immediately entered into a history of his disorder, and lamented her grandmamma would not let her go to him.

Lady Meredith's conduct did not, it will be presumed, appear so very unreasonable to his Lordship; but it was not his business to dispute the point, he contented himself with soothing her vexation, and speaking well of the objects of her warmest affections, even Evelyn came in for some share in his compliments, and so, by degrees, lessened her agitation, and prevailed on her to walk up and down the gallery with him 'till she had recovered her spirits and temper.

When a man once takes it into his head, he will be very fond of a woman; or, when a woman feels the same disposition towards a man, it is amazing with what ingenuity they spin out every little thread of event 'till it forms a web of happiness or misery.

Lord

Lord Claverton considered Lady Meredith's ill humour as a most fortunate circumstance, for it procured him the company of Ellen two whole hours after she had ceased to remember her vexation, without forgetting the kindness of his consolation.

CHAP. VIII.

LADY Meredith having found her son in no immediate danger, made her visit short, and returned, eager to impart to Sir Arthur her observations on Ellen's conversation with her, at Castle Howel; He agreed with her, that a permanent attachment to Percival, who was wholly dependent on their son, and (except as his eleve) totally unknown to

to them, would ruin their child, without bettering him, they were, therefore, designing proper means of separating them, when Lady Margaret Howel was announced.

In the same breath that she asked for the sweet Ellen, she congratulated Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith on their good fortune, and proceeded, with an apparent candid liberality, to inform them, her brother had taken an uncommon liking to the charming child, that he thought she promised to be one of the greatest beauties of the age, that he considered her want of education as a serious misfortune, which he would be happy to redress, by instantly sending her to Bath, at his own expence, and give her every advantage which the first instructions could bestow.

Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith looked at each other, they thought of the benefit their darling would derive from this generous offer of Lord Castle Howel, and their bosoms swelled with gratitude ; but they recollected
they

they must part with her, and their eyes filled with tears.

Dr. Macshead entered, and neither one sensation nor the other was observed; Lady Margaret said, she would leave the Baronet and his Lady to consider of the business, and left the room with the Doctor.

After a short silence,

"What good will a fine education do her?" said Sir Arthur, "without we could give her a suitable fortune?"

"Very true;" answered Lady Meredith, "but she is so charming, that—and besides, Sir Arthur, we have so little in our power; I am thinking, in depriving her of so generous an offer, we really shall be guilty of an act of injustice; what can we do for her?"

Sir Arthur sighed. "What shall I do for a companion, when I am laid up with the gout?"

"And who will read and prattle away the long evenings with me?" said Lady Meredith. "But these regrets are selfish, we must *conquer them*, the dear child may make friends."

"*May*," answered Sir Arthur, "she *will*; her face is a recommendation of her heart from God himself, she will be in his protection, let her go."

This conversation had long and frequent interruptions from the feelings of Sir Arthur and his Lady, the determination was painful in the extreme, but as they were both convinced it was right, Lady Meredith followed Lady Margaret, and thankfully acquainted her with their acceptance of the Earl's generous offer.

Ellen was now summoned; she was still with Lord Claverton and her favorite Winifred.

"As

"As Cot shall save me," cried Winifred, "my Lady has learnt to bear malicious, I am feart to co down."

Ellen, without speaking, obeyed the summons, her little heart again swelling with resentment; but when informed of the change that was soon to take place in her situation, that she was to leave her family, to be moved from the lov'd spot, where, 'till New Year's eve, she had not known a sad moment, all regret for her late disappointment vanished; she looked at her venerable parents, when told she was to leave them; bursting into a flood of anguish, she flew to the bosom of Sir Arthur, her arms round his neck, his involuntarily clasping her.

"My dear grandpapa, will you then part with you Ellen?"

The affecting question, followed by sobs and dumb expressions of grief, overcame Sir Arthur,

Lady

Lady Meredith, in whose placid mind meekness and fortitude were blended, led her to her chamber, and there explained to her the generous motive that dictated an offer of such advantage, but in vain was the good lady eloquent on every advantage that would result from the offered protection of Lord Castle-Howel.

To be accomplished, elegant, and well informed, was fine; but to stay at Code Gwyn with Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith, to be instructed by her uncle and aunt, and share in the amusements of Percival Evelyn, was a thousand times finer.

Two hours passed in adducing solid reasons, on the part of Lady Meredith, why the Earl's offer should be accepted, and in hearing the innocent and no less feasible ones of Ellen, why it should be rejected: But her's was the voice of uninformed simplicity, warm in its natural attachments, and totally unacquainted with the world: Lady Meredith

was

was herself a child in experience, yet she could argue as well on a point where the obvious interest of Ellen was concerned, as the best counsel in the world.

Strongly impressed with the idea, that a secret attachment was taking root in her heart to young Evelyn, the more she reflected the more earnest she was to remove her from so dangerous an attraction; and as all opposition to her wish was perfectly new to the child of her heart, she at length prevailed; Ellen consented to return to Castle Howel, with Lady Margaret, and thankfully accept the Earl's noble and disinterested offer.

By the time this conference was ended, the purport of Lady Margaret's visit was spread over the house. Winifred, notwithstanding Lady Meredith's commands not to appear in her sight, was seated on the ground at the door of the chamber, and it no sooner opened, than she set up a cry, and fell down at Lady Meredith's feet in strong hysterics.

Ellen, fondly attached to the humble friend of her youth, bathed her face with her tears, and was kneeling by her, when Lord Claverton, alarmed at the extraordinary noise, appeared in the gallery, and with an exclamation of surprise, asked the cause of Winifred's sorrow. The answer he received was as great a blow to him as it had been to Winifred, and as unexpected too; he descended with hasty and perturbed steps to the parlour, where Lady Margaret sat, with undisturbed countenance, apparently hearing the fond regrets of the old Baronet, but really engrossed by the tender looks of Doctor Macsheat.

Lord Claverton, too much interested to be on his guard, immediately asked the cause of a commotion that was visible in the countenance of every inhabitant of Code Gwyn, Doctor Macsheat and Joseph Wilks only excepted.

Lady Meredith and her weeping child entered before he was answered, the latter with her

her straw bonnet tied over her flowing hair, ready to attend Lady Margaret, but her swollen eyes and dejected looks were to Lord Claverton a welcome proof of her reluctance.

The fond grandmother entreated Lady Margaret to allow for the caprice, which, in youth, is often the result of unlimited indulgence: Lady Margaret embraced and encouraged the fair novice, and promising she should return to Code Gwyn in two days, took her in her carriage, which was followed by the tears and vociferous exclamations of poor Winifred. Her Ladyship, at her brother's request, invited the Lieutenant to accompany his niece, but as his guest, Lord Claverton, who professed an uncommon friendship for him, complained of sudden indisposition, he politely excused himself.

The feelings of his Lordship at this moment were rather troublesome: What could induce Lord Castle Howel to take a young girl under his protection but beauty? What

was her want of accomplishments to a man, who did not mean her attainments should be sacrificed to his pleasures? Judging from himself, he had no doubt but the Earl meant to get possession of the young beauty for his own private amusement; but, as *he* was ~~some~~ years younger than Lord Castle Howel, and, as he rightly presumed, as superior in the art of intrigue as in person, the scheme of sending her to a school at Bath, which he found was proposed, did not, on recollection, appear so terrible. Ellen, in the bosom of her family, under the affectionate eye of Lady Meredith, and the piercing one of her son, in the habit of strolling about with Percival Evelyn, or listening to the heroic reading of Miss Meredith, was certainly a more difficult conquest, than Ellen at a public boarding school.

There were governesses, and *some* he *knew*, who were assailable; the medical quality of the Bath waters was a pretence for his openly going there; the Code Gwyn family
could

could not suspect his motive for visiting a young lady, with whom his acquaintance commenced under their own roof, besides he might very naturally invite the Lieutenant to accompany him. These thoughts succeeded each other in rapid progression, while Sir Arthur's family were pursuing Lady Margaret's carriage 'till it was no longer visible.

Lord Claverton was indisposed—Sir Arthur's gout threatened him—the ladies had headaches—and the Doctor and Lieutenant being left to themselves, the latter proposed to walk to the Rectory to visit the Parson.

They found Mr. Meredith asleep, Percival by his bed-side, and Miss Meredith reading in the study; rest and quiet being the usual specific in Mr. Meredith's disorder, after just looking at the sick man, tea was ordered and Percival summoned to join them.

The extraordinary whim, as Doctor Macfhean chose to call it, of Lord Castle Howel, had been discussed over and over, between him and the Lieutenant, and it recommenced at tea.

Miss Meredith, for her part, wished there was not a black design at the bottom, to spirit her niece away, and so keep her out of the knowledge of her friends, 'till some gallant youth atchieved wonders in effecting her release; for, as to her education, she solemnly assured the Doctor, *that* was perfectly compleat; she had herself heard her read through seven quarto volumes of Cassandra, the folios of Clelia, and Princess of Cleeves, and few people, she would say, could give more force to the greatness of Oroondate's soul, or more grace to the tenderness of Cassandra's, than Ellen Meredith.

Young Evelyn, too much used to Miss Meredith's rhapsodies to attend to her conversation, was looking over an old newspaper,

per, and sipping his tea, in a kind of absent listlessness, when the sound of a name most familiar and dear to his heart, and a confused recollection of the conversation, brought a crimson glow into his face, which retreated in one moment, and left it pale as ashes; his eyes, naturally full, swelled in their sockets; his eye-brows were distended, and every sense was converted to ear, when Miss Meredith proceeded in her eulogium on the finished education of her niece, her surmises of the causes of sending her away, her prognostics of the consequences, her dislike of a modern education, and her regret at parting with Ellen; the Lieutenant laughed at her romantic phrases and odd notions; the Doctor, who made it a rule to be all things to all men, though he spoke not, looked a coincidence with Miss Meredith, when suddenly yecival Evelyn fell back in his chair.

Miss Meredith shrieked, the maids, one of whom was old enough to be a grandmother, rushed in, and set up a lamentation in their

own harmonious language, which very much resembled the Hibernian howl. Mr. Meredith waked out of the first natural repose since his indisposition, rang his bell, no regard was paid to it, he with great difficulty reached his morning gown and got to the door, but could distinguish nothing but a confusion of sounds, now moderated by the Doctor, now increased by the women, and feeling himself weak was returning to his bed, there to wait an explanation, 'till some part of the family were at leisure to give it him, when a yell reached his ear, that quickly banished all attention to his own weakness; it was Martha, his old maid, who screamed, "Percival is dead." There was now no apparent want of health in Mr. Meredith, he rushed down and found his young eleve without any signs of life, a cold dew on his forehead, and Doctor Macshean in the act of letting him blood; Miss Meredith, in terror at the accident, appealed to her brother, without wondering at his presence, whether he should or should not be bled.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith looked on the palid face with speechless agony and astonishment; the incision was made but no blood followed the lancet; Doctor Macsnean looked very serious; Mr. Meredith in sad, but solemn composure, ordered the door and windows to be opened, and, no longer weak, raised the body in his arms, loosened his collar, and directed Martha to bring a tub of warm water; she obeyed, but in her hurry a trifling mistake occurred; as they were brewing, she substituted warm wort for water, but by the time she returned, the young man had opened his eyes, he bled freely, and the colour of life re-animated his face.

It was in vain he was urged to assign a cause for this sudden attack, in vain he was pressed to describe his present feelings; his eyes were fixed, and, to the surprise of every body, he continued silent; a tear strayed involuntary from either eye, they dropped on the hand of Mr. Meredith, and increased his

astonishment. Miss Meredith now recollected her brother's situation.

“Good God! brother,” she exclaimed, “why did you come down? You will get your death.”

Percival heard this and recovered his speech; lamented having exposed his friend to such hazard, intreated him to return to his chamber, and begged with such earnest sadness that he might accompany him, that they retired together, attended by Martha, who went to put her master to bed, leaving the Lieutenant, Doctor Macshead, and Miss Meredith, to talk over and wonder at the strange event, 'till the moon arose, when the Doctor and Lieutenant walked home.

CHAP. IX.

THE Earl, delighted with Ellen's simplicity, and that frankness of heart, which mingled expressions of tender regret for the friends she was so soon to leave, with gratitude to him for the cause; and finding his attention much more pleasantly attracted by the beauty of a human than a field flower, undertook himself to begin the formation of a mind so open and naturally ductile.

Lady Margaret had already sent measures and orders to Vigo-Lane, for a complete assortment of fine linen and cloaths, suitable to the age and appearance of a school girl.

The depression of Ellen's spirits was increased when shewn to her elegant apartment; she had hitherto slept in a small chamber adjoining her grandfather's, Winifred was her bed-fellow, and had, usually, some light hearted tale or other to amuse her with while undressing, when her venerable parents called out the salutations of the night.

She was now in a large room superbly hung, richly carpeted, furnished with gilt cabinets, and large mirrors, but with a loneliness of grandeur that recalled the comforts of her own little chamber, in such vivid colours, she burst into tears; the servant who attended her reported this to the Earl and his sister, the former immediately conjectured the cause, and begged Lady Margaret to invite her to take half her bed. Lady Margaret's rule, from which she never swerved, was, to be always of her brother's opinion: She called a smile into her features, said she was just thinking of the same thing, and sent her woman to fetch Ellen into her apartment.

To

To those, used to kindness and affection, every deprivation is grievous, and a heart pining under a change so wounding to sensibility, opens to every approach of the treatment it regrets: Ellen found herself soothed by this mark of attention, her tears dispersed, she went to bed, and her mind, hurried by the events of the day, being now composed, sunk to rest. - But however ready her Ladyship had been to oblige her brother, she had not in this case been civil to herself; the admitting Ellen to her room was, in some degree, to admit her to her confidence; for *her* woman, who was her privy counsellor, had as many things to amuse her Lady as Winifred had for Ellen.

Doctor Macsnean had already found the secret of conveying his amorous vows, thro' Mrs. Gibson, and though he had not *now* a vast deal of gold to give her, yet, as she knew her Lady abounded, and as she saw it was very probable both Lady and gold would in time be his, she very purteously delivered the

the letters and messages he continued daily to send, and entertained her lady with a number of good qualities, with which she kindly endowed him, as well as with many pertinent remarks on his handsome person and pleasing address.

Those who have fixed their private affections, where they do not chuse publickly to avow a partiality, and those only, know the value of a confab, at bed time, with a favorite servant; Lady Margaret was resolved not to be deprived of such a treasure, and therefore, as Ellen was attached to *her* maid, she proposed sending for her, in pure kindness, which gave her great credit in the opinion of her brother, who sent a card to Code Gwyn, with a request, that Winifred might attend her young lady, and, at the same time, a light cart carried a hamper of fine old Madeira, for Sir Arthur's own drinking, from his Lordship, and a large canister of very fine tea, for Lady Meredith, from his sister.

But

But neither Madeira, tea, nor any of the advantages which promised to result from the patronage of the Earl, could dispel the regrets which filled their hearts for the absence of their favorite; with a tear on each venerable cheek, Lady Meredith went herself to the house-keeper's room, to inform Mrs. Griffiths of Lord Castle Howel's message: Mrs. Griffiths received the news of her niece's advancement, far otherways than her Lady had done that of Ellen.

For the first time in her life joy superceded respect; she hastened to consult her brother, old Griffiths, on the mutual assistance necessary for them to give their niece; and as fast as the old man could hobble from his pantry, they returned to Lady Meredith, who remained in the house-keeper's-room, with the lucid drops still distilling from either eye.

The two old servants readily consented Winifred should go to her lady; Edward brought

brought out the contents of his leather purse, and Mrs. Griffiths ransacked her drawers for the remains of her old finery. Winifred was called for, but no Winifred was to be found in or near the house; Mrs. Griffiths fumed, and Lady Meredith considering the sending for her as a proof that Ellen was not yet reconciled to her good fortune, was angry at her absence, and impatient for her return; as she was not, however, to be found, the servant was dismissed, with a grateful card from Lady Meredith, and as much of Winifred's wardrobe as Mrs. Griffiths could find, with an addition from her own hoards, that she might not disgrace either her Lady or her relations.

In half an hour after the servant was gone, home came Winifred; not as usual, singing 'till the woods echoed her wild coarse strains, nor with her natural hop, skip, and jump; but silent, slow, and heavy—she entered her aunt's room.

Mrs.

Mrs. Griffiths, who had not much of the virtue of patience in her disposition, began to rate her roughly for her absence, and demanded where she had been, in a key, that reached the hall. Winifred, out of humour and irritable, answered in equal tone.

The duet was in alt; one stormed, the other half crying, half scolding, made up in volubility what her aunt possessed in authority, and it was not 'till Lady Meredith had twice raised her mild voice, either party could be silenced.

Winifred confessed that she had been out all day, but to where, or with whom, she was stubbornly silent, and was retiring in great fullness when Lady Meredith bid her prepare to follow Ellen to Castle Howel.

All traces of ill humour immediately vanished, she laughed, sung, and capered, but suddenly stopping—

“Cot

"Cot Almighty safe us, sure my mistress is not coing to stay at that tiffish place."

"Devilsh place!" returned Mrs. Griffiths, "'tis the finest place in the thirteen counties; I was with my Lady there forty years ago."

"If it was with Cot Almighty, Cot forgive us, I had rather come back to Code Gwyn; but, to be sure, if Miss Ellen is there that is enuf."

Lady Meredith desired Winifred to be ready early next morning, and Mrs. Griffiths having ostensibly inventoried all the articles she had selected to send with her to Castle Howel, recommended it to her to devote the remaining time to getting her things in nice order.

But Winifred had other concerns to settle; she first met Joseph Wilks, by appointment, in the great barn, and gravely assured him, that all matters must end betwixt *him* and *her*,
for,

for, that her mistress would never have Lord Claverton, and as she was resolved to live and die with her, desired he would take his handkerchiefs and buckles, and get another sweet heart.

Joe was astonished; he had made love to Winifred by order of his Lord, the girl, tho' very far from handsome, was young, playful, and innocent; Joseph had somehow persuaded himself into a liking for her, and as he had a little of the coxcomb in *his* disposition, as well as his master, his vanity was humbled at her sang froid.

He attempted to persuade.

"No, no, Mr. Joseph must not think to come over her."

He threatened to hang himself.

"It matters not, Mr. Joseph."

He

He would marry the first girl who would have him—but all his rhetoric was to no purpose, 'till he swore he would leave Lord Claverton, as soon as he had saved money to stock a farm, and live at Code Gwyn: This mollified the fair damsel, who then consented to keep his presents, and suffered him to accompany her on a secret expedition to Code Gwyn village.

In the way Joseph was *too* happy not to be very fond, and as Winifred looked on her marriage as a settled thing, she was easily persuaded there should be no secrets between man and wife; his blandishments obtained what all Lady Meredith's authority, and her aunt's scolding, had failed to do, the history of her morning's excursion.

Mr. Meredith's man had been before day at Code Gwyn, on a secret message to Mrs. Winifred Griffiths, to beg she would directly come to Mr. Evelyn, who was very ill.

Mr.

Mr. Evelyn was too great a favorite not to be at all risks obeyed; but what was poor Winifred's consternation to find her friend with his eyes swelled almost out of his head, his hair disordered, his hands trembling and burning, and his whole frame speaking at once grief and disease, hardly articulate, he stammered the name of Ellen, and burst into tears.

Winifred had not slept—the night had been almost as tedious to her as it could be to him, and on account of the same object, she therefore wept too, and a few minutes conversation let her into a secret she had never suspected, and engaged her in a cause, which so accorded with her own wishes, that she swore vehemently, both in Welch and English, she would die by it.

Evelyn declared he could not live without Ellen, and his confidant said, it was not fit he should.

Evelyn

Evelyn detested all Lords—Winifred supposed they were a parcel of outlandish rìvels.

“Oh, what shall I do, Winifred, if I cannot hear of my dear Ellen?”

She promised she would walk barefoot to Castle Howel but he should.

Winifred communicated this confidence to Joe, with her opinion, that “true lof was petter than cowl,” in which he accorded, and, after a promise on her part, to meet him again in the parlour, when Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith were gone to bed, he returned back, and she proceeded to the rectory, according to agreement.

She went up the back stairs to Evelyn’s room, whom she found extended on the bed and his eyes shut.

“Fat, are you asleep, Mr. Evelyn, Cot pless us? Cet up I have news for you.”

Percival

Percival opened his eyes, but, in attempting to rise, fell back with such violence as alarmed his confidant; he, however, in a faint voice, begged she would tell him her news directly.

It was with visible joy he heard Winifred was to follow Ellen, he entreated her to let him know every thing that happened, and above all, to conceal the secret he had entrusted to her from all the world, even from Ellen herself, and not tell the dearest friend she had, he was sick of love.

Winifred swore, as she had done before, without the smallest inward reproach; for as Joseph was to be her husband, she had no idea it was any breach of confidence to tell him all she knew.

Miss Meredith's foot on the stair, coming to enquire after Evelyn's health, shortened her visit; and, after promising to write to him by David (the rector's man) away went Winifred.

CHAP. X.

POSSESSED of Winifred's declaration, that Ellen would not have Lord Claverton, Joseph communicated it to his Lordship, and received five guineas in reward for past and earnest of future services ; the terms he was on with his sweetheart gave him an excuse to visit Castle Howel as long as Lord Claverton chose to stay in the country, which, his Lordship resolved should depend on events.

In the mean time, as the whole family now at Code Gwyn were his aversion, as the intense coldness of the weather prevented his going out, and as, indeed, he would have no pretence for staying if he was able to travel, it was, in the present posture of affairs, the most convenient plan he could adopt, to be
too

too much indisposed to leave his apartment, and as Mrs. Griffiths was a person he now chose to be well with, he patiently listened to her dissertations on water gruel and white soups.

Joseph's last interview with Winifred was very tender, he, consequently, knew every syllable that had passed at the rectory; and the five guineas in his pocket was a stimula to industry he was resolved to deserve; but he was too artful, at this interview, to drop a word in favor of his Lord: No, all Joseph's wishes were centered in the little farm, with his dear Winny! and as he confirmed this assertion with many fashionable oaths, they separated in mutual good humour, and unbounded confidence, on *one* side, at least.

The noble owner of Castle Howel now experienced there *were* amusements more grateful to his feelings than even Botany; he pointed out to Ellen the different classes of learning and literature that enlightened the world;

described the progress refinement and luxury had made in modern times ; spoke of the immortal Shakespeare, and quoted several beautiful passages, suitable to her comprehension, and so adapted his information to the experience of his fair pupil, that after a long morning passed in the library, Lord Castle-Howel had the satisfaction to perceive the restless absence of thought, with which she had at first heard him, gradually change into eager attention ; *her eyes* sparkled with pleasure, the rapidity of her questions and the quickness of her apprehension flattered and delighted *him*, and often did he regret, that the tyranny of custom forbad him to undertake the *sole* information of such a mind himself.

In the evening his Lordship taught her the gamut, both vocal and instrumental. She played on the harp a number of tunes by ear, and accompanied it with her voice, but the *science* of music was a matter she was totally unacquainted with ; how this and other female attainments came to be unknown to the

Miss Merediths, will appear in the course of this history ; *all they knew* they had taught Ellen.

The hour of retirement was less irksome than the preceding night ; she had sufficient subject for recollection, equally new and delightful, and her only wish, after the welfare of her friends at Code Gwyn, was, that Percival Evelyn could witness and share in the expansion of her mind.

Winifred arrived early next morning, and the Lieutenant and Doctor Macsheat rode over before dinner.

The Earl received them with the utmost cordiality, and the reader will suppose Lady Margaret was not less condescending.

In the mean time Lord Claverton was deliberating on the step he should next take ; Joseph was shut up with him the most part of the day—and as it was purposed Ellen's school

education should take place when the Christmas recess ended, it was settled between Doctor Macshead and his noble Patron, that Bath was the precise place likely to renovate a constitution, injured by the hot climate from whence they were just arrived; and, preparations were accordingly began for their departure.

The communication between the families of Castle Howel and Code Gwyn, became every day more frequent; the Miss Merediths were good horse-women, and Ellen delighted to see them; the severity of the weather was the Earl's objection to *her* riding, but he was pleased when his sister took her in the chariot to visit Code Gwyn, because she returned more cheerful and happy.

- A Nobleman of Lord Claverton's rank in the neighbourhood, was also an object for politeness: The Earl rode over to visit Sir Arthur, and invite Lord Claverton to Castle Howel. The cultivation of this acquaintance

was

was of too much importance to Lord Claverton's views to be neglected; he accepted, with great satisfaction, an offered corner in the Earl's carriage, and during the course of the visit, Lord Castle Howel understanding he meant, as well as themselves, to make some stay at Bath, very politely pressed him to accept of the same convenience thither, which, the reader will be sure, he as politely accepted, and immediately wrote to order his carriage and servants to meet him there.

Every thing thus en train, Winifred, full of her importance at the fine Castle, of the fine cloaths making for Ellen, of the fine vows of her lover, and a long etcetera of finery—entirely forgot, both Evelyn and her promise. At every excursion to Code Gwyn, as Ellen was the oracle of the parlour, Winifred gave her orations in the servant's-hall.

Sir Arthur, who, from his sedentary life, greedily devoured every bit of news, kept Ellen at his elbow from the moment of her

arrival to her departure, asking a thousand questions; while she, who knew no pleasure superior to his amusement, stored up every anecdote she heard, and every occurrence that happened, for his entertainment.

Lord Claverton saw there was no possibility of obtaining a moment of her attention, and therefore became, with the family, an auditor of her sensible prattle.

Winifred, on her part, held forth to the servants, in their different ways, with an air of profound knowledge; she told her aunt, that all *her* experience would not carry her the day through at Castle Howel; and, as to her uncle, "Cot help the owld man, his white hairs would stand an end if he had as many sorts of liquors to cork and uncork as the putler at Castle Howel; the cook, Cot knows, was a dish washer, and the tairy mait mate coot putter enuff, but nothing like the putter at Castle Howel."

"And

“And so you have learn’d,” said old Griffiths, “already to despise your native home, I foresee thou wilt return as ragged as a colt.”

“Cot help you, uncle, ragget! why there’s no end to the riches at Castle Howel.”

Old Griffiths shook his head in token of incredulity and disgust, and the rest of the male domestics followed his example.

Mrs. Griffiths called her an upstart ignorant wench; she warranted she could manage as good a family as any in the County.

The maids felt themselves doubly hurt, first, in having their abilities degraded, next, in seeing their old fellow servant so finely dressed, and so full of airs; so that poor Winifred, abused by all, was obliged to seek consolation, where, indeed it was always ready, from Mr. Joseph, and declared she would not ask to come again with Miss Ellen, among such a low set; yet, as often as the carriage

was ordered she made the same request, repeated the same stories, with the same effect, and left Code Gwyn with the same declaration.

At length the day being fixed for their departure, Ellen chose to go on the Sunday to take leave of her friends, and, with the little vanity natural to her sex, had her hair dressed by Lady Margaret's woman, wore a new green satin habit, with a white beaver hat, and green feathers, and attended by Winifred, in a drab cloth Joseph, a black hat and handsome band: They met the family at Code Gwyn church.

Every eye was turned from the *Creator* to the *created*; it was not that Ellen looked more beautiful, but she was finer and more *unlike* themselves.

Lady Meredith and her daughter's hearts dilated, the pew door was thrown open, they handed her in, and even the good Rector suffered

ferred his attention to be a moment taken from his duty.

Mutual gratulations however soon subsided ; the respect she had always been taught was due to a place of worship, solemnized her features, but her eye glanced involuntarily to the Rector's pew, where Evelyn used to sit ; no Evelyn was there ; she eagerly explored every part of the church, and still no Evelyn was to be seen.

She coloured.

What ! did Percival Evelyn know she was coming to Code Gwyn, for the last time, for she did not know how many months, and was he not desirous of bidding her farewell ? — “ Well, who cares ! ” and she sat down in the middle of the Psalms.

“ I have not seen him since I left my grandfather's ! no, not once ! and my uncle, I

G 5.

have

have not seen him either! and it is now above a fortnight."

"Pray, aunt Mary, where is Percival Evelyn?"

"Lord, child, did you not receive my letter about him?"

"Letter! no: I never received a letter in all my life, when did you send it?"

"Above a week ago, Mr. Joseph, Lord Claverton's man, promised to give it Winifred for you."

"Then I am sure he forgot it; but what of Percival?"

"Why, my dear he has been dying."

Ellen turned pale.

"But

“But he is better now and will dine with us—my brother thought him too weak to sit in the cold church.”

Ellen's face changed to the deepest scarlet, and she fixed her eyes on the pictures in the prayer book, without attending to the service, 'till roused by Lady Meredith at the end.

Nothing, during the ride home, occupied Ellen, but Percival's illness; and though Lord Claverton was eagerly waiting to hand her out of the carriage, and though her Patron had explained to her the propriety of attending to the laws of politeness, she could think of nothing but Percival. Winifred having seen Lady Margaret's maid always attend her Lady immediately on her alighting, and willing to shew her fellow servants her improvements, actually pushed before Lord Claverton.

“Where,” said Ellen, without taking the least notice of the Peer, or any other being,

“where is the letter my aunt Mary sent, by Mr. Joseph, about Percival?”

Winifred coloured; it was the first thought she had given Percival since she left him sick at the Rectory, after having entered into a solemn engagement, to do him all manner of kind offices with her mistress, but as she was too great a lady at Castle Howel to be visible in any part of the house where such bumkins as the parson's man had access, she had not been in the way of receiving a single message from, or in the recollection of saying a civil thing of, the forgotten Percival: Winifred's, though simple, was not a bad heart, her conscience smote her for her breach of promise to Percival, but no letter had she received from Mr. Joseph, and therefore none could have been forgotten.

“Give me the letter directly,” said Ellen, rushing by Lord Claverton, up stairs, without even thinking on Sir Arthur.

“What

"What letter, and where are you going, Ellen?" asked Lady Meredith.

Winifred followed her mistress to her room, and Lord Claverton, who understood more of the matter than any other person, retired to his, and rang for Joseph. They had very little time to arrange affairs, before Winifred rapped, and desired to speak one word with Mr. Joseph, who, on being interrogated about the letter, confessed (with many protestations of sorrow for his carelessness) that he had lost it out of his pocket, on the road to Castle Howel.

She, whose partiality for Joseph was far from decreasing, was easily persuaded to forgive; but Ellen, impatient, uneasy, and anxious to know every thing about Percival, declared he was a very idle young man, and never should do any thing for her again.

Winifred called Cot to witness Joseph was a very honest lat, and would not hurt a worm;
but

“ You have forgot ME, Ellen, *quite, quite* forgot *me.*”

Ellen did not answer, her arm rested on him, and his hand involuntarily clasped hers, as it hung over his shoulder. He then began to answer his friends, and say, how much better he was ; he breathed freer, and although the observations Lady Meredith could not help making, were not the most pleasing, either to Sir Arthur or herself, yet, as this was to be the last interview, and as she loved Percival, she chose rather to *seem* not to *see*, than be *obliged to censure.*

They were in this situation when Lord Claverton made his appearance : Strange effects have been related from looking on the Gorgon. Lord Claverton did not actually turn to stone, but all the colours of the rainbow were by turns predominant in his face.

Lady Meredith endeavoured to divert the attention of Lord Claverton from the young pair,

pair, *and them* from each other, but having tried all ways she could think of, gave the matter up. The dinner was the most silent meal they had ever made, and was dispatched with that impatience of restraint, which a family, in the full confidence of each other, must be supposed to feel, on the eve of separation, in the presence of a stranger.

Lord Claverton felt he was himself that restraint.

The pauses in conversation growing longer and more frequent, could not be misunderstood: No man was better acquainted with the etiquette of fine breeding, yet, in this instance, he could not prevail on himself to leave to themselves a family, whose insipidity was his aversion, whose plain manners were his contempt; for, opposite to him sat Ellen and Percival, solely occupied by each other, and seeming to wait with impatience the moment when the many eloquent things, spoke in their mutual glances, might be put into words.

“That

"*That* moment," said the haughty Peer, inwardly, "they shall *not* have." He endeavoured to enter into conversation with Catherine.

What was now the subject of her studies? Would she honor him with a commission to send her books of any kind?

Catherine thanked him, but she had enough for her life time; besides, there were no new Romances.

A silence ensued. He was still more unfortunate in his next effort.

"Had the early lambs suffered by the cold weather," was a question to Miss Agnes, from which he had great hopes.

It was answered with a formal "No."

Again a dead silence.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith vexed, and really offended, at a restraint, which grew more intolerable every moment, asked Lady Meredith if she would not order coffee, and, as soon as it was over, taking Ellen and his mother in each hand, and bowing to Lord Claverton, he led them out of the room ; they were followed by the other ladies.

Poor Percival sat with his eyes fixed on the door, which closed after them ; not being asked to go, he wanted resolution to move, and endured a three hours silence the picture of despair.

Sir Arthur did indeed enter into a kind of forced conversation for some time, but fell insensibly into his evening nap.

Lord Claverton still persevered in his plan, which Percival's modesty assisted ; for though not considered, by the Peer, of importance enough to be spoken to on any other occasion, yet *now* he condescended to address a few insignificant

insignificant questions to him, and so contrived to render him his entertainer who was the object of his hatred.

At length, supper, and Lady Meredith with her family, relieved all parties. Ellen's eyes were red and swelled, she drew her stool between her grandfather and grandmother, and, grasping a hand of each, sat totally absorbed in her own reflections; and although Lord Claverton had the mortification to remain quite unnoticed, that mortification was much softened when he observed she was not more attentive to any other part of the company, except indeed at the moment when Mr. Meredith and his eleve departed, when her adieus were more tender and oftener repeated than sat entirely easy on him; he, however, consoled himself in the certainty that this would be the last interview, at least for some time, with the formidable Percival, for the next day he accompanied her to Bath, where Lord Castle Howel's carriage set her down at the first school in that polite city.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THUS, then, a new world was opened to our heroine; the well qualified governess of this little seminary was a woman, whose reputation, as a female writer, had been established, without estranging her from the duties of her situation; and she wisely employed her excellent sense^s in the cultivation of the human mind.

Under so good a judge, both of *matter* and *manner*, the improvements of her pupils was, as might be expected, rapid and systematical: Mrs. Forrest, though prepossessed by the beauty of the young stranger, immediately discovered the deficiencies in her education:

Ellen,

Ellen, on her part, was confounded, to see ladies, much younger than herself, perfect mistresses of accomplishments, for which she had but just began to acquire a taste; comparing herself with her new associates, how ignorant, how contemptible did she appear; what time would it not require, what application, to become what they *now* were.

With the playful avidity natural to young minds, used to a regular succession of instruction, she saw them varying music, drawing, reciting in different languages, and fine works, to all which she was a total stranger.

Unable to bear a comparison so humiliating, tears filled her eyes, and dropped on her white bosom.

The sensible governess was not less attentive to her new charge, and drawing the most favorable conclusions from the observations she had seen her make, insinuated herself into her confidence, by a judicious mixture of instruction

struction and compliment, and described, with such apparent ease, the gradations through which a perfect knowledge of all female accomplishments were to be attained, and so entirely entered into the true spirit of politeness, by contriving to raise her pupil's opinion of her *own* ability, as she imprest her with respect *for* and attention *to* herself, that all her uneasy sensations subsided; she wrote a short letter to Lady Meredith, and then joined her school-mates in perfect good humour.

Lord Castle Howel gave every charge relative to his protegee; he obtained as a great favor, that Winifred should be admitted into Mrs. Forrest's family, but all conversation was strictly forbid with her young lady: The truth is, that though Ellen approached as near perfection as most heroines of her age, yet she certainly had a welch accent, which, to the refined ears of Mrs. Forrest, and her ladies, sounded a little uncouth; and, as Winifred's was a barbarous jargon of neither Welch nor English, but a bad mixture of both, which she

but her rhetoric was thrown away. Ellen's displeasure continued, and she went to Sir Arthur with tears in her eyes, and her cheeks glowing with anger: Immediately after Mr. Meredith and Percival entered, the latter supported by his reverend friend.

Ellen shrunk from the paternal embrace of Sir Arthur, and stood aghaft.

The countenance of young Evelyn was, as before described, always pale; but it was the paleness of sentiment, a thinking habit, and a pensive turn of mind; his face was oval, perhaps beyond the exact line of beauty; his complexion clear brown, and his eyes large, black and piercing, which, with his dark eyebrows and eye lashes, gave a most interesting turn to his countenance; he was prepossessing and agreeable, and far beyond mediocrity, handsome. But this was the shadow of his former self. His eyes, no longer brilliant, sunk in his head, his face thin and yellow, his lips parched and burning with hectic fever, his

his voice tremulous, and an universal weakness pervading his whole frame—he gasped for breath, and unable to answer the kind enquiries of the family, sat down on the nearest chair.

Ellen looked round, the glance of compassion, of sorrow, met her from every eye.

She burst into tears.

“Percival, my dear Percival,” cried she, running towards him, “what is the matter? How long have you been ill?”

Percival tried to speak, but failing in the effort turned away his head.

“What!” cried she, half turning to Mr. Meredith, “can’t he speak? Percival, won’t you speak to *me*, to Ellen, your own Ellen?”

Without turning his head, the blood faintly mantling into his face,

“You

Lord Claverton, though he appeared inactive, and even inattentive, to what was going forward, never lost sight of his original plan; from the instant he beheld Ellen he marked her for his own; rude and ignorant as she at first appeared, her graces softened on his observation; what she might be *made* struck *him* no less forcibly than it did Lord Castle Howel, though without the same disinterested ardor to assist the noble work of nature.

To be Lord Claverton's toy, his amusement, as he had early planned, it was no matter how *little* Ellen knew; but to be his ostensible Mistress, to shew him the envied possessor of grace, ease, understanding, and such beauty! she could not know *too much*; it was indeed cursed impertinent of Lord Castle Howel to be meddling; an old fool! surely he might lay out his money to more advantage; and so thought both Doctor Macsheat and Lady Margaret; but the more attached the Earl continued to his young favorite, the more difficult of access she would prove to him; to
wean

wean him, therefore, from an object on which his mind voluntarily turned, when Lord Claverton could so much better dispose of that object himself, was a point too desirable and important to be neglected; he knew the Doctor's views in the Castle Howel family, and the prudential caution with which he proceeded was an example not lost on the Peer; the Doctor indeed was a Socrates in love.

Although Lady Margaret assured him she had realized something very comfortable for a matrimonial garnish, she had only *assured* him, and he was resolved to have proof; for he had no reason to flatter himself his alliance would be eligible to the Earl, and, as in case of the worst, there were many snug little things to be procured by interest, as well for medical as other men, he was determined to be slow and sure; Lord Claverton, therefore, easily convinced Doctor Macsheat, it was absolutely necessary to proceed immediately to London, and Lady Margaret, who was as anxious to retain *her* conquest, as his Lordship could be

to secure *his*, became an immediate convert to Mr. Macfhean's opinion; her nervous complaints returning, she could not live without Dr. Warren; she retired to her apartment the same evening, and continued growing worse 'till the hour was fixed for their departure for London.

The Earl employed the last morning in selecting, from the different shops, a variety of useful and ornamental trinkets; which, with a purse very liberally filled, he sent Ellen, after he had taken leave, and Lord Claverton, with great apparent modesty, entreated Lady Margaret would have the goodness to present Miss Meredith, in *his* name, a very elegant little watch, and fesse montre, as a faint memorial of the happy hours he had passed under the hospitable roof of her venerable grandfather.

Ellen's heart ached, separated from every being and every scene which happy childhood had endeared to her memory, Lord Castle

Howel was the rock of her confidence, a superior being, to whom she looked up with a mixture of affection and respect, she dropped involuntarily on her knees, as he took her hand, "Be sure you write to *me*, Ellen," said he, raising and pressing her to his bosom. "And me," said Lady Margaret.

Lord Claverton coloured, he even trembled, as he kissed the fair hand of Ellen, whose eyes followed the carriage 'till it was obscured by the dust of the London road.

A calm succeeded the busy scenes, which, for the last four months, totally occupied our heroine, very favorable to instruction and to recollection; the avidity with which she received the former, rendered her a great favorite with her governess; the mortification she felt at her own deficiencies, was a spur to emulation, and the idea of surprizing the friends she loved with her acquirements, a constant incitement to application.

No longer in habits of the robust exercise in which she had hitherto delighted, her person grew delicate, and her air became (from the union of improved mind and body) easy and elegant; her manners, still charmingly vivacious, were soft and politely refined; she had naturally a sweet as well as strong voice, under Ruzzina it became possessed of all those thrilling graces, which melt on the ear, and reaches the soul of harmony.

The harp, from her early practice, was the instrument she soon most excelled on, but her general improvements in music were astonishingly rapid.

Winifred, though kept at humble distance, continued, nevertheless, to make Ellen the confidant of Mr. Joseph's constant passion, by shewing her the letters she received from him; it was not indeed in nature, so passionate a lover should forget a mistress, of whom his Lord so often reminded him; nor could Ellen help understanding how frequently Lord Claverton

verton spoke of the pleasant hours he passed at Code Gwyn, and that he proposed being at Bath early in the Spring Season.

That Nobleman continued to keep up his acquaintance in Grosvenor-Street; and Doctor Macnean having satisfied himself as to Lady Margaret's prudent acquirements, took a house in Conduit-Street, which he elegantly furnished, and in which he gave handsome entertainments to select parties.

By means of his Patron, and Patroness, he was getting into snug practice; he kept one maid, and two men, at board wages, jobbed his horses, generally dined with Lord Claverton, in Portman-Square, and supped with Lady Margaret, in Grosvenor-Street.

Habits and customs of many years may be suspended, but will not soon be totally eradicated—the Earl, by degrees, returned to his botany; this, however, did not lessen the pleasure of Ellen's correspondence, or prevent his

punctually and affectionately answering her letters.

The Lieutenant was an inmate of his house, and fellow labourer in the botanical experiments, but although few noblemen might, with more certainty of success, ask a favor of the Minister, his mind was so strangely abstracted from common occurrences, that it never once struck him, how desirable to a young officer promotion was; and the Lieutenant, though panting to be employed, was too diffident to drop a sentence that would remind him of it.

Lord Claverton was often favored with a sight of Ellen's letters, heard of her improvements, and languished for an opportunity of again beholding a face, that (in spite of all the blandishments with which quality and fortune are surrounded in London) was ever before him.

Nobody

Nobody was more eager to pay court to every new beauty, to admire, to toast ; nobody entered with more gout and less delicacy into every fashionable intrigue, than Lord Claverton ; his fortune large and independant ; his title and family ancient and respectable ; his face handsome, and his person, for a man of quality who had been seven years in the guards, still tolerable : It is not to be doubted, but there were fathers, guardians, and brothers, who had particularly distinguished him, he visited every where—but the fair Ellen swam on the surface, she floated on his imagination, and whatever variety or beauty met his eye, fancy painted *her* in colours more glowing, and all that pleased in the many combined in her.

Intrigue, the business of his life, when compared to the tranquil possession of Ellen, was no longer desirable ; the style of her writing was polished and animated, and what most charmed him, was, that the same innocence and inexperience which inspired and kept hope alive, ran through all.

A Machiavel in intrigue, no point escaped him that led to the haven of his wishes, and, in consequence of his politics, Ellen and Winifred had letters by the same post, which, as they are originals, we beg the reader will accept in their native dress.

“DEAR ELLEN,

“Never let the noble heart despair, as we
 “say at sea; for here, when I had been all
 “the year lagging at Lord Castle Howel’s
 “elbow, and often dining with the first Lord,
 “without his so much as mentioning me.
 “To be sure, he did not think of it, that I
 “must say, but, God help me, I thought
 “enough of it, I’m sure. Well, all of a sud-
 “den, Lord Claverton sends for me: “My
 “brave lad, said he, and he took my hand,
 “you are so taken up with the Earl, you for-
 “get your old friend. So, you may be sure
 “I apologized—but mark. Says he, I re-
 “member how you fought in the Lion, when
 “you was wounded. And so I was, Ellen,
 “I

" I thought I should have gone to David
 " Jones's locker. Now, says he, I don't
 " like such a brave lad as you should lye by,
 " and so go to the Admiralty, and there lies
 " a commission for you. Well, Ellen, I could
 " not speak, but away I scampered, and now
 " am Captain of the Hyslop, and we are
 " stationed to the East Indies, I shall go down
 " to take leave of my good father and mo-
 " ther; Lord Claverton is coming to Bath,
 " and conveys me so far on my way; you
 " may be sure I will bring you a cargo of
 " diamonds from India, as big as Potatoes."

" From your affectionate uncle,

" LEWIS MEREDITH,

" Captain of the Hyslop Sloop of War."

Before this letter was read quite through,
 in the presence of the governess, the voice
 of Winifred, remarkably shrill, was heard at
 the door of the room.

“As Cot shall help me, and pless me, and I wish I may co to the tivil himself, if I don’t speak to Miss Ellen; why, sure you are worse than the children of Isralitish, not to let me carry my mistress coot-tidings, about my master’s son, the Captain, who, as Cot shall safe me, will soon be an Admiral, and a Commodore.

“But I tell you no.”

“Tell me nothing, I shall tell my mistress,” and in bounced Winifred, her face in a glow, and an open letter in her hand, which she eagerly presented to Ellen; who, in conformity to the rule of the school, handed it to the governess.

“As Cot shall judge me, Miss Ellen, that’s very civil of you; if you won’t read my letters yourself, I am sure you need not give it to other people; pray, Miss, read it yourself, and you’ll see what a precious coot creat man Lord Claverton is; my Cot! my Cot! I would give
forty

forty coot shillings to be at Code Gwyn when the news reaches there."

This was the exact chord, it vibrated on all Ellen's feelings.

"My dear, dear grandmamma!"

"Ay, and my old master! As Cot shall save me, he will not want his wheel chair: Oh, what a brave man is Lord Claverton!"

"How happy will it make my aunts!"

"Yes, and the Reverent too; aye, and Mr. Percival—I dare for to say, with Cot's blessing, he will go beyond sea, with the Captain. Oh, what a fine man is Lord Claverton!"

Such a period has elapsed since the name of Percival has been mentioned, the reader will conclude he has not been much the subject of our thoughts, that, however, is a secret which time only must discover — it called a blush

blush into Ellen's cheeks, and suddenly stopped her rapturous expressions of joy.

Mrs. Forrest having slightly run over Winifred's letter, returned it to her, saying, it was not of importance enough to require Miss Meredith's perusal.

Winifred received it with an air of pique, and a sly wink at Ellen, which meant, "we'll read it together however."

The hours of rest were literally less so to our heroine than any she had hitherto passed at Bath, she got into a chain of recollections which did not befriended sleep, and early in the morning Winifred was at her bed-side with the letter, which, as it is the duty of a faithful historian to relate facts, I must own she had not fortitude to decline reading—it ran thus.

"Me deraft Winny !

"Ever sence I saw your butiful eys, I never
"gets any rest nor never goes no were, but

“ wat i think on you, as for a good noble
 “ master thank God i have that, an now I
 “ must tell you my Lord is very grate with
 “ the king, an he need only ax and have, and
 “ he has axd the king to make the noble les-
 “ tenant a Captain, and to be certain if that
 “ is not prefering him i dont no wat is, it is
 “ with some peple out of site out of mind,
 “ but God forbid that should be my case, or
 “ my master’s, tho’ to be sure Lord Castle
 “ Howel mite a done it over and over, but
 “ some people will not do themselves good,
 “ nor any one else either; an my Lord says
 “ to me, Joseph sais he, I wish I could just
 “ peep in at Code Gwyn, just to see old Sir
 “ Arthur, wen the Captain goes home, and
 “ sweete Miss Ellen, and then he sighs and
 “ moans — Oh ! Winny, if there is one tru
 “ lover in the herth, it is my master, and
 “ me—we shall be at bath in a week at fur-
 “ dest.”

“ I am till deth do us part

“ Your true lover

“ JOSEPH.”

“What a noble man is Lord Claverton,” whispered Winifred, fearing to awake two young ladies, who lay in the same room.

“He is very good indeed,” said Ellen, “I could not have thought—”

“As to that old fusty odd mortal, Lord Castle Howel—”

“Hush, Winifred, I won’t have you speak disrespectfully of him.”

“As Cot shall save me, Miss Ellen, I believe you hate Lord Claverton, for making my young master a great man.”

This exclamation put an end to the conversation, for Winifred’s voice and colour was sure to rise with her passions, and the ladies were disturbed.

From this period Ellen began to expect the arrival of the Captain and his Patron, a kind

kind of perturbation and suspense agitated her, and the seeds of vanity, afterwards conspicuous in her character, shewed itself for the first time. She was unusually attentive to her dress, and practised an infinite variety of graces in order to astonish Lord Claverton.

At length the expected visitants were announced.

Lord Claverton had heard Ellen was taller and much improved, but by the admiration with which he appeared to be struck, it would seem *this* was the first time he had ever seen her.

Her hair, no longer partly shading and partly displaying her white neck and forehead, in a profusion of wild ringlets, was dressed in the nicest order; her fine falling shoulders innured to braces, now, of themselves, fell in the most graceful form; her shape, which was only small and strait when she came to Bath, was forming into woman; her eyes, in
which

which a faucy vivacity was used to play, now withdrew from his ardent gaze, and dropped in modest dignity on the floor. The Captain saluted her in his blunt way, with,

“Ellen, you look like an angel, and ’tis an angel only can speak my gratitude here,” leading her to Lord Claverton.

Ellen courtesied—“Permit me, my Lord, to thank you for my uncle, Sir Arthur, for Lady Meredith, for —”

“For yourself, dear angel,” interrupted Lord Claverton, in a transport he could not repress.

Ellen blushed, Mrs. Forrest offered her congratulations, and the conversation became general.

As the Captain was impatient to pay his duty to his parents, that he might be ready to sail—and Lord Claverton saw, that without the

the particular favor of the governess he could not hope to be admitted, when his friend was gone ; he assailed her in the vulnerable part, by a judicious and sensible critique on female writing, in which he contrived to give hers a delicate preference.

However acceptable to the woman, and flattering to the author, the praise of a man of Lord Claverton's sense and rank ; however soothing to the vanity to which the wisest of the sex are a little inclined, Mrs. Forrest's own strict conduct, as well as regard to the sacred trust reposed in her, by the parents and guardians of her pupils, rendered her very difficult of access, but Lord Claverton's mind was, as before said, a daring and inventive one, he soon hit on an expedient to remove those impediments.

There are, the polite world *well know*, a description of women, who, having done every thing in their little power, to scandalize one sex, and dupe the other in their youth, carry.

carry their propensities so far into age, as to become odious to society ; and there are also even among these, *some*, who have art enough to shield themselves from general detestation, by a profuse expenditure of ill gotten wealth ; by playing high, giving splendid entertainments, opening their doors to an indiscriminate mixture of company, and making their houses convenient and agreeable to all parties ; by these means they are sure of getting by degrees into some sort of estimation : — Ladies beginning to get a name, such as mistresses made wives ; ladies beginning to lose a name, such as wives made mistresses ; old women with money who want husbands ; young ones, with none, who want any thing that offers ; gamblers of both sexes ; fortune hunters, old debauchees, and military smarts, are sure to grace their assemblies ; if a great deal of money is either won or lost, the high bred ladies will swallow the bait, and so the house of a wretch, whose character is not only notorious, but dangerous, becomes the fashion.

Mrs.

Mrs. Elderton, an Irish lady of this description, led the ton at Bath, Lord Claverton was her very old friend, and it was not in nature for her to penetrate further into his designs than he literally intended. Mrs. Forrest, she said, was a charming sensible woman, she wished to see her school, and Lord Claverton begged to escort her.

Never was any thing so delightful! She invited the amiable governess and a select number of her lovely pupils, to her public dinner: If Mrs. Forrest had a foible it was fondness for fashionable company, and though ill natured people talked freely of Mrs. Elderton, who would not ill natured people talk freely of? Mrs. Forrest thought her extremely amiable, and from this period she and her ladies were often invited to Mrs. Elderton's large parties, and often supplied by her with tickets for all public places; as she could not object to such flattering attentions from her, and as Miss Meredith was a particular favorite, she was always one of her companions.

panions. Lord Claverton, who was every where, took care to be at hand, to pay the most respectful attention to Mrs. Forrest, and the most oblique ones to Ellen.

It had been intended by the Castle Howels to visit Ellen, on their return through Bath, but an event happened that detained them in London the whole year — this was the indisposition of Miss Capus, (for she had never assumed the title of Castle Howel) the unhappy woman had long been afflicted with a dropsy, which, at length, baffled the art of medicine: When the Doctor pronounced her doom she began to think of the bourne, from whence there is no return, and fervently implored Lord Castle Howel would deign to pronounce his personal forgiveness; his refusal added strength to her naturally peevish and obstinate temper, she wearied him and Lady Margaret, and finding both inexorable, wrote to the ladies — Frances and Gertrude, for their influence in favor of a dying penitent.

“Dying!

“Dying! and is the wretch really dying? and is it yet possible we may live to see an heir to our family honors we do not detest?” cried the elder maiden.

“I forgive every thing if she will but die!” answered the younger.

“What does she say?” resumed Lady Frances, looking at the letter, “She cannot die in peace ’till she is forgiven by the Earl.”

“Bless me,” exclaimed Lady Gertrude, “was there ever any thing so foolish, not to let the creature die!”

Pen and ink was called for, and both the ladies signed a short letter, requesting their nephew to let his wife die! and to give them the earliest notice of the happy event, as they would immediately leave their seat in the North, and, notwithstanding the length and expence of the journey, join him in London.

Rather

Rather forced into the measure than convinced it was necessary, Lord Castle Howel took a reluctant journey, where love, in his juvenile days often carried him, and exchanged forgiveness with his sick wife: But the lady did not, as the sage maidens seemed to expect, expire immediately, her disorder turned so perversely favorable, it was five months doubtful whether the strength of her constitution would not at last conquer.

During this time Ellen was pursuing her studies, and Lord Claverton not an instant neglectful of his—he had gained what he considered so great an advantage in his familiar access to Ellen, that he did not doubt, with the aid of Winifred, but his business was in a fair way; but the same object always seen in the same party, and the season being arrived when it is the fashion for people to run from Bath with as much avidity, as two months before they run to it, surmises began to be dispersed about the few remaining card tables, not exactly to the credit of Mrs. Elderton,
and

and tending to injure her new friend, the governess; of this Lord Claverton was one of the first to be acquainted, and as he possessed the happy art of turning most common events to his own advantage, he was also the first to communicate it to Mrs. Forrest, who was charmed with his candour, and considered his immediately leaving Bath (which he protested he did solely on her account) as a very proper and delicate compliment: Thus then he left Bath in high favor, and proceeded to his house on the forest in as high spirits, to prepare for the reception of the little charmer, who he was resolved to allure thither, when he returned, which he intended should be very early in the winter; but fate had otherwise disposed of her.

It was August before Lord Castle Howel could send his aunts the account of his enfranchisement; it was September before they arrived in town; in October Mr. Meredith brought a card from Lord Castle Howel, to

request Miss Meredith might be consigned to his care.

It is impossible to describe the wild sensations of joy our heroine felt at this unexpected summons; she could hardly believe she was indeed going home to Code Gwyn, to see all the dear relatives on whom she still doated; nor was Winifred less delighted; they ran from room to room, embracing and congratulating each other; the cloaths were hastily packed, not without some little murmuring from Mrs. Forrest, who really felt regret at parting so suddenly with a pupil for whom she had the most perfect friendship; the chaise was at the door before six the next morning, and, attached as Winifred was to Joseph, she even neglected to apprise him of their journey.

The carriage, though they travelled post, bore no proportion to the celerity of Ellen's ideas; she remembered every town they went through on their way to Bath, slept at the same

same inns, and, at length, eagerly recognised the turning from Castle Howel road to Code Gwyn; but at the stone stile of the church there was no Percival—Winifred looked too, “Well, Cot forgive me!” cried she, recollecting her broken promise.

The carriage passed with great velocity, and soon stopped at Code Gwyn. The same placid benevolent countenances and affectionate hearts—the servants, the house, exactly in the state she left it, raised a thousand tender sensations in her mind—she flew rather than stepped from the chaise, the servants were clamorous in their joy, and the family mingled tears with embraces; Winifred was received with vast deference in the servants hall, and even her uncle and aunt called her Mrs. Winifred. Ellen fancied she saw a furrow more on her grandfather’s cheeks, and sometimes a pensive glance shoot from Lady Meredith’s eye, but as joy and tenderness were most predominant, this was the fancy

of the moment, she retired early by Lady Meredith's desire, and never did innocence enjoy more sweet repose.

CHAP. XII.

THE next morning the momentary observations made the preceding night were renewed, an unaccustomed gravity presided in every countenance.

“Set by me, my love, my own Ellen,” said Lady Meredith, taking her hand.

“Well, my child, you have been a traveller, does not our plain house appear little and contemptible, after —”

“Dear

“Dear madam, what are you saying? — Little! contemptible! 'tis a paradise I wish to live and die in.”

Lady Meredith kissed her forehead, “But there are changes, my dear, in life.”

“Changes! What changes! What do you mean? Speak out, my dear grandmamma.”

Lady Meredith hesitated. “I knew I could not, your uncle will retire with you, he will read you some letters.”

Ellen stood up — “This moment, then, dear Sir,” said she, “don't keep me in suspense.”

He accompanied her to another room— But it is now necessary to carry my reader back to some family anecdotes which we have barely hinted at.

The want of an heir in the Castle Howel family was a subject of the severest regret to every part of that branch of it in which the titles and estates were now vested; on demise of the present Earl it returned to the descendants from a second son, whose representative, a libertine on principle, had actually, with secret and false professions of love, deceived both his cousins, Lady Frances and Lady Gertrude Howel, at the same time that an artful and low-bred woman had drawn him into a private marriage; the children of this low union were the presumptive heirs of Castle Howel; the father braved the resentment of the injured ladies, the wife scoffed, at, and the sons derided it. At the death of Lord Castle Howel's wife the exasperated virgins disclosed the full extent of provocation to a hatred so inveterate; and it was then that they entreated him to be the avenger of their injured honor, by taking a wife from whom they might hope a disappointment to their wicked cousin; both ladies offering to settle

settle their whole fortune on the issue of such marriage.

Lord Castle Howel fancied himself attached to Ellen, merely as a beautiful and amiable child; but now, urged to make choice of a wife, from family reasons, his heart claimed a different interest in her, and that choice instantly fell on Ellen.

He mentioned her to his sister, and to his aunts:—Lady Margaret, in her heart, little-caring who possessed Castle Howel after her time, was only solicitous to retain the good things of it, as long as she could, to herself; it was, therefore, a very unpleasant thing to hear her brother talk of a wife at all; but, if he must marry, certainly the young thing he chose would be more governable than a town lady; and, seeing it was not to be avoided, entered, with a tolerable grace, into an animated description of the fair Ellen to her aunts.

When old ladies get certain matters into their heads, it is marvellous with what address they conduct them; they would not suffer his Lordship to sleep before he wrote his proposals to Sir Arthur Meredith, enclosing the card to Mrs. Forrest, in consequence of which our heroine returned to Code Gwyn.

This proposal, then, was the grand spring, on which all the movements at Code Gwyn depended. Mr. Meredith opened the business with becoming gravity, he read the Earl's letter through with as little variation of voice as if it had been a church brief, when finished he laid it down, and looking anxiously at Ellen, saw such unfeigned astonishment in her countenance, such a vague indefinite attempt at recollection, that he asked if he should read it again, and again went through it with the same inflexible gravity, and laid it down, waiting for her answer.

“What

"What is all this," cried Ellen, "I cannot understand you; is it Lord Castle Howel, who has been so good to me, that writes this?"—

"There is no other Lord Castle Howel, Ellen."

"And has he been disgracefully married? And is his wife now only dead? I never before heard he had one. And is it possible? Can so grave, so wise a man, act so much like a simpleton? Me! Does he want to marry me! Such a thoughtless giddy girl as me! Uncle, are you not very sorry?"

"Sorry, my dear, for what?"

"That so respectable a being should be so very ridiculous."

"Then," said Mr. Meredith, still more gravely, "you will not accept his Lordship's offer?"

"Accept it, no, to be sure, you would not wish me to marry any body yet, much less an old man!"

"But he is an Earl, Ellen."

"So much the worse, his folly will be more conspicuous."

"If the *folly* of the act is your principal objection, suppose we could prove it one of consummate wisdom?"

"Nobody doubts your logic, uncle, when your heart is in the argument, but I hope that is not the case now."

"And why, my dear, do you hope so?"

"Because I feel I shall be very stubborn."

"That is not like you, Ellen, to be pre-meditately stubborn."

"I

"I cannot help it, I will not be married."

Mr. Meredith arose, "Am I to give this definitive *will not*, to my father and mother?"

"No, I will go to them myself directly; or, if you please—but, uncle, tell me, upon your honor, do you think they wish me to marry Lord Castle Howel?"

"You ask me on my honor, Ellen?"

Mr. Meredith changed colour, hem'd, and drew Ellen's chair nearer his own.

All the concerns, engagements, and interests of this family, had hitherto been conducted with such confidence in each other; so little reserve, either among themselves or towards the world; the *to-days* were so exactly like the yesterdays, so little seemed to be hoped from the future, that could lessen the enjoyments of the present; so little to fear, except in the eternal separation, for which

every member of it was in some degree prepared, that Ellen could only suppose the apparent agitation of Mr. Meredith proceeded from some interest he took in the affairs of Lord Castle Howel; or, that he was disappointed in her rejection of so splendid an offer: In the former case, her own heart, open to sympathy, and generously alive to every sensation of pity, was ready to adopt his inquietudes; but in the latter, as ambition, or a desire of riches, had not yet biassed one thought, she sat down predetermined, to combat his prejudices, and retain her own freedom.

It was thus Ellen accounted for Mr. Meredith's change of countenance, and reflections like these occupied her during a silence, which, in spite of every effort on his part, to conquer his feelings, preceded what he had further to say.

Poor Ellen! little did she foresee that the last happy hour she was to spend at Code Gwyn was already past, that the morn-
ings

ings of tranquillity, the noon of ease, and the evening of peace, had abandoned the habitation of Sir Arthur Meredith and his forefathers.

Before Mr. Meredith could speak, a tear dropped from his eye and fell on Ellen's cheek, but ashamed of a weakness, degrading, as he thought, to manhood and christianity, again he hem'd, and in a voice, which, though tremulous at first, soon acquired its usual strength : He informed her, that from various and accumulating expences, some of which could not be avoided, Sir Arthur had been induced to borrow money of a *rich neighbour*. "Perhaps," said he, sighing, "it would have been better we had not been so readily supplied ; had any difficulty attended our borrowing, we should have recollected the still greater difficulty of repaying : My father's infirm state of health ; your father and mother's death ; my mother's grief, which a long time endangered her life ; my own natural indolence of temper, are no excuses, though they

they were complicated causes of our negligence : In short, Ellen, ——”

The equality of Mr. Meredith's temper here gave way to the excess of his feelings! again the big tear dropped on the cheek of his equally agitated auditor, who, totally unacquainted with money concerns, and never having heard of pecuniary wants, except any of her school fellows had been particularly profuse, wants, which the liberality of her patron, and the generosity of her own heart, enabled her to supply, could comprehend very little of what Mr. Meredith wished to disclose ; she understood, indeed, for the first time, that Sir Arthur had not every thing in his own power ; that Lady Meredith was not happy ; that her uncles and aunts must therefore be in affliction, and that the origin of these evils was borrowing money of a rich friend : All this was new, but it was enough for Ellen, the relatives she loved were in distress, to overwhelm her.

“How

"How mistaken have I been," said she, "I thought the blessings and comforts of the world were made on purpose for the good, I knew you were all good, and did not doubt but you had every thing you wanted."

Mr. Meredith sighed. "We may not, Ellen, be in possession of this family mansion another year."

Ellen started.

"We have notice of the foreclosure of the mortgage."

"Mortgage! Who, what is that? Not live in our own house. How can my grandpapa live any where else? it is impossible, he will die, he will break his heart; his wheel-chair, you know, would not run, without danger, except the floor was very even."

"That, that and my dear mother's feelings, is all that afflicts me; for, as to the rest, as my house —"

“ Oh, dear ! I dare say we could all live very easy there ; but who is this Mortgage ? What right has he ? ”

Mr. Meredith then explained the meaning of mortgage, and foreclosure, and, to her further astonishment, informed her, that their kind friend, John Morgan, Esquire, was the gentleman, whose occasions for money was, at this time, so pressing, that though it was, as he declared himself, with extreme reluctance and distress of mind he put them to any inconvenience, he could not possibly do without it. Mr. Meredith stated the impossibility of raising the money, the most to be hoped for was, to join his father in assigning over the whole estate, reserving only the mansion-house, and the grounds belonging to it, for the life of his parents, and even this he doubted whether Mr. Morgan would or could agree to : He continued, that it was proper she should know the very narrow compass in which all their future hopes of comfort lay, before she finally resolved to
forego

forego the prosperity and advantage which were offered to her in Lord Castle Howel's alliance; he trusted, that while he lived he should have a peaceful asylum for her beauty and innocence; but his life was an uncertain tenure, and desirous as he hoped he always should be to put his firm trust in the God of righteousness, he owned, that when he looked on Ellen, and recollected the state in which *his* death would leave her, he dared not express his feelings:—"My health, my dear Ellen," added he, "is already impaired."

Ellen fixed her tearful eye on his pale face, and resumed Lord Castle Howel's letter; the surprise and astonishment which at first filled her was no more, she read it over in anxious search of something alleviating of the poignancy of her feelings.

"Has Lord Castle Howel power?" asked she, in a half whisper, "to remove these misfortunes?"

Mr.

Mr. Meredith gently took the letter from her. "He has it amply in his power to shield you from sharing in it."

"And is that all?" cried she, with vivacity, as if a load of anguish had been removed from her heart, "then never mention his proposal more: But you see that he still promises to be my Patron and protector, a much more honorable as well as suitable character for him. If, indeed, he could have made my dear grandfather happy, and satisfied that ugly man, who I always hated, though he used to bow so low, and flatter me so much, I believe I—I—But as he can't, you know uncle, we will pray to God, and trust in God, and none of us can tell what may yet happen."

The happy eagerness with which Ellen satisfied herself it was not in Lord Castle Howel's power to make her family happy; and the joy that darted from her eyes, when she declared she would hear no more of his proposals, were such convincing proofs, not only that
the

the dazzling offer of making her a Countess had no weight, but that her heart recoiled from the disproportionate union ; Mr. Meredith could not prevail on himself to hint what really was true, though he was too generous to urge it as a plea in favor of the marriage, that Mr. Morgan's necessity would certainly give way to his respect for a family allied to Lord Castle Howel, besides the likelihood that his Lordship would assist so old and respectable a relation of his young bride ; but these and many other flattering probabilities which might follow, was disregarded when he saw her heart was averse ; convinced that if she acceded to the Earl's proposal she would add to the wretched list of young females, who, with the best of dispositions, bound to men for whom they have no predilection, feel *too* late they have hearts as well as hands, he resolved to communicate his sentiments to his father, and spare his niece any solicitation on a subject, against which his own heart revolted.

The

The calamity that threatened the Code Gwyn family was not likely to remain concealed from domestics, who would be such sharers in the common misfortune. Mrs. Griffiths cried so violently in communicating it to Winifred, that it was necessary for her to take a portion of her own double distilled peppermint water; and Mr. Griffiths was too sick to take his morning pipe.

“It signified nothing,” the bailiff said, “to manure that meadow, or crop this field, it is too good for old Morgan.”

A general lassitude and despair blunted the edge of industry, and in the common aspect of domestic management, things, in the vulgar phrase, were actually going to rack and ruin.

A little flower garden, which Ellen and Percival had made, in a corner of the paddock, was the only spot that shewed a careful manager; the thickset hedge, set by herself, was cut in the nicest order, and particularly thriving;

thriving; the small parterre, edged with box and mignonet, which forming a double cypher of P E and E M, was filled up with the choicest flowers in succession, and appeared in continual bloom.

Ellen observed her garden as they drove up to the house, and longed to revisit the scene of her childish labour and amusement; as soon, therefore, as Mr. Meredith left her, she took her hat and began her little walk; crossing the paddock, she was overtaken by Winifred, with swollen eyes and grief-worn countenance, her sighs, not quite so gentle as the zephyr, nor her moanings so soft or harmonious as the dove, little affected her gentle mistress, who, truth to say, had already forgot the mortgage, foreclosure, the offered marriage, and even the affliction of Sir Arthur, and walked along with her eyes fixed on the spot she was approaching, every other faculty totally absorbed in that of thinking.

“The tivel tak riches, and all false hearted people,” quoth Winifred.

Ellen

Ellen was silent.

“That 'Squire Morgan is a tivel in garnet; no wonder his house his haunted by a great black tog in a winding sheet.”

Ellen advanced to the wicket.

“Why to be fure, Cot Almighty will let the tivel fetch him in a whirlwind; his own tear sweet taughter was left to be starved alive, and now, you see, he has no chick nor child.”

Ellen stopped, and gazing on a beautiful passion flower, that twined round every bush in the garden, softly and sweetly sung,

“Alas! where with him I have stray'd

“I could wander with pleasure alone.”

“Are you there, Winifred?”

“Yes, Ma'am,” whined Winifred, who though she had expended her stock of sorrow,
thought,

thought, on the strength of her aunt's example, she must still be doleful.

"Don't you think it very odd, Winifred?"

"Yes inteeet, Miss, Cot help us all out of our misery."

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Ellen, surprised.

Winifred stared, but presently conjecturing that it was possible Ellen was not yet acquainted with the impending misfortune, and that it did not signify whether she was or not, as it was not in her power to do any good."

"Nay, I am sure, Miss, I don't know what is the matter, but that lazy tog of a gartner have let all my holly hogs and polly hanches die."

"But don't you think it very odd, that—"

"Hod

"Hod, no, Miss; I think nothing hod in this world, since David, the Parson's man, married the still room maid, of Castle Howel."

David at this instant appeared, with a spade and watering pot, but kept aloof.

"But, Winifred, what is become of Percival Evelyn; is it not very odd he is not here with my uncle?"

"Not hod at all, Miss, because he is gone to college."

"To college!"

"Why, to be sure, Miss; because, poor poy, you know he has not cot a prafs fardin of fortin, and so, as my aunt says, our poor tere Reverent does all the coot he can for every poty, and so he is to be his curate; half a lof is petter as no preat."

"God forbid," said Ellen, seriously, "Percival Evelyn should ever want bread."

"Amen! amen! pray Cot, Miss; and I'm sure it would be a marcy if Mr. Joseph and Lord Claverton was to hear of our troubles and our miseries and come to ——"

Winifred was never guilty of thinking, but if she had studied for an unfavorable moment all her life to mention his Lordship, she could not have succeeded better.

"Lord Claverton!" said Ellen, scornfully.

"You forget, Miss, how many fine places he treated you to at Bath."

"I hate him."

"And you forget, Miss, he made your uncle a Captain, but the sin of ungrateful is worse even as death."

"Ah! Winifred, so I had—but I wish I could see Percival Evelyn; don't you think he will make a very handsome parson?"

"Humph, well enuff for a parson!"

"What does my uncle's man wait for?"

Winifred, immediately bawled out "Fine times for you, Mr. Tavy, to be standing with your hands in your pockets, I suppose your wife works for both."

Nature speaks the same language every where. David, who had been a kind of dangler to Winifred, and had often experienced her mild temper, expected, as he had presumed to marry another, he should not escape without a satyrical fling, he took no notice of her, but leisurely advanced to the little garden, and began to work.

"And pray who set you to work here? I dare say the parson's garden will employ you."

"Why, Mrs. Winifred, nobody set me to work, but as I am not like some folks, say one

one thing and do another — I like to serve Mr. Percival when his back's turned as well as when I see him ; and so," bowing to Ellen, who having been two years in England, and being moreover dressed in a superior style, he had not presumed to accost, although he had formerly been one of her favorites, "and so, as he said, he valued every little seed set in Miss Ellen's garden more than gold ; I promised I'd take care of it, and I think, Mrs. Winifred, (leaning on his spade, and looking proudly round) I think I have kept my word."

The hint of broken promises called the colour into Winifred's guilty cheeks ; she could not help recollecting certain tokens, and certain promises, all of which she had most unconscionably suffered to slip her memory : But it requires a greater mind than her's to feel a fault and own it, particularly to an inferior, for, so she, who was addressed by a Lord's valet, considered the parson's man of all work ; with as haughty a look, therefore, as

K 2

she

she could assume, she endeavoured to hide her guilt, and turned out of the garden, leaving Miss Ellen and David to look at the improvements and talk of Percival: This was a subject not easily exhausted—it would have lasted a long summer's day without intermission; and Ellen was summoned to dinner before she was tired of David's store of anecdotes of what Percival said, how he looked, and what he had done.

CHAP. XIII.

THE affectionate reception our heroine met from the family, on her entering the hall, added to a harmony of spirits, which seemed to have taken possession of her in the garden; and after dinner she brought down her store of baubles and trinkets, and made presents

presents from them to all the family ; not a word was said either of Lord Castle Howel, or Mr. Morgan, and the week passed with tranquillity.

After church, on Sunday, the family dined at the parsonage, where Mr. Meredith had been making some alterations—he had turned his study, which adjoined the large parlour, into a bed chamber ; he had been very attentive to the raising the gravel walk even with the glass folding doors, and had also made folding doors to the entrance : Lady Meredith's eyes filled, as her son explained to her, in a whisper, these several alterations, and Ellen actually gasped for breath when a recollection of the conversation with her uncle, suggested the use intended to be made of them.

The image of Percival, the anticipation of his return, the many secretly projected rambles, which, for the last week had kept her mind in a kind of rapturous delirium, now

dispersed; and in their room, her venerable parents, deprived of all the natural comforts of their inoffensive lives, driven from the seat of their ancestors, their large family thronged into the parsonage, and subjected to inconvenience and mortification—appeared in such terrible colours, that, unable to repress her emotions, she hastily left the side of Lady Meredith, and ran to an arbour in the garden, where a violent burst of tears relieved, without removing from her mind, the sad images fancy had raised there.

By the thickset hedge before her lay the road to Castle Howel, on the instant she raised her eyes a servant, in the Earl's livery, approached, he pulled off his hat and rode on. This little incident carried recollection back to Lord Castle Howel — His kindness had inspired her with a grateful affection, and his knowledge both of men and books had impressed on her mind a respect superior to what she felt for any other person; she wept to think, that, perhaps, she was now the
object

object of his anger, and for ever deprived of his friendship.

She raised her eyes a second time, and saw 'Squire Morgan trotting by towards the parsonage, he saw *her* too, but not with his usual fervile look, he turned his bent brow hastily from her, and without the smallest inclination of his head passed on.

By an impulse as sudden as unpremeditated she also darted towards the house: Mr. Morgan, the suppliant humble Mr. Morgan, who would never take a chair before every individual of the family were seated, now sat in great state in the arm chair, with his hat on, though in the presence of Lady Meredith, who was smelling her salts and trembling every limb—his voice no longer soft and insinuating, but stern and discordant.

“Sir, I have never received a shilling interest for any of the sums I advanced, people will make me pay and I must be paid.”

"The proposal I made you, Sir," answered Mr. Meredith, "of leaving Code Gwyn house and lands to my parents, during their lives, on condition of my relinquishing all future claim."

"It won't do, Mr. Parson, it won't do; I have lent more than the value of the estate, and must immediately take it into my own hands to bring myself home; I began the world with half a crown, and have no money to spare."

"If that is really so," said Lady Meredith, faintly, "it is but just Mr. Morgan should take care of himself: How long, Sir,—"

"I am sure I am very much concerned, Madam, but your Ladyship will please to recollect, I am an *humble*, a very *humble* man, my money has been got by dint of hard labour, I have no pretensions to gentility."

"Say

"Say no more, Sir, say no more," sighed Lady Meredith.

"You may stay a month or two, or even 'till Christmas."

Lady Meredith drew out her handkerchief, and Ellen throwing herself on her knees, hid her face in her lap and wept aloud.

Miss Meredith never, in all the romances she had read, met with any misfortune which was the consequence of running in debt, nor had she heard of a single knight who was armed against a foreclosure; but she had long considered Mr. Morgan as the demon of avarice, and not doubting but this was his hour of triumph, was secretly praying for a whirlwind to carry him away.

Miss Agnes wept because her mother wept, for let what would happen she had a very comfortable stock of wool and cheese.

Mr. Morgan arose and was stalking towards the door, when, casting a contemptuous glance at Ellen, "I am sorry to see your granddaughter returned on your hands, what good will her fine learning do her now? Aye aye, I have seen many such freaks in my time, Lord Castle Howel would have done a more charitable thing to get her a good service."

At this instant the sound of a carriage was heard, Mr. Morgan had hardly time to untie the silk handkerchief from his neck, and take off his hat, before Lord Castle Howel, his aunts and sister were in the room.

Nothing could equal the Earl's astonishment at the scene which presented itself, Ellen still kneeling. "What," said he, looking round, "can be the meaning of all this?"

Lady Margaret, whose cue it was to be very fond of Ellen, caught her in her arms, while the old ladies, with delighted looks, were examining her through their spectacles.

“Dear Lady Meredith, may I, without being impertinent?” said the Earl,——

The agitation of Lady Meredith’s spirits, the mortification she had suffered from Morgan’s behaviour, the agonies of her heart at the prospect before her, and now the sudden appearance of the Castle Howel family, so humiliating to all pride of circumstance overpowered her weak frame; in making an effort to rise, she sunk senseless on the floor; the cries of the affrighted Ellen rent the air, she screamed ’till she was black in the face, and, before Lady Meredith was recovered, had a convulsion fit.

The two old ladies were frightened out of their observations; Lady Margaret assisted the Miss Merediths in taking care of their mother, and the Earl himself carried Ellen into the garden.

Mr. Morgan, who heard, as *he* supposed from good authority, the Earl’s wife was

K 6

dead,

dead, and that he would marry immediately, had concluded Ellen was sent home and done with.

Lord Claverton's designs being insidious and wicked, were of a stamp so accordant to his own principles, he was presently master of them: But Lord Castle Howel's actions being the entire result of innate honor and refined sentiment, were enveloped in a mystery he could not penetrate; facts, however, were stubborn things: If his Lordship had got a bride, and one of the strangers was her, she was of too antient a date to lessen the interest of the beautiful Ellen, on whom he looked with delight at his entrance, and for whose distress he seemed to suffer so much. The crafty observer, therefore, had now to fear, the beauty of the granddaughter would raise a friend to rescue the estate out of his hands. It may here be asked, if avarice was Mr. Morgan's motive for calling in his money, why he should not rather rejoice at an event that promised payment without
so

so unpopular a step, as the foreclosure of the mortgage? And thus we answer.

According to the old assessments of the estates, the mortgage and interest really amounted to its value, but when it is remembered, the tenants and their descendants had, at their original rents, lived and died in their farms, allowing for the increasing value of landed property, the advantage of seizing on a complete manor, at the price it would have fetched five hundred years back, must be obvious; besides this, enveloped in the deepest recess of a heart devoted to avarice, fraught with hypocrisy, and swelling with malice, lay concealed schemes, and motives too black to be at once unravelled.

It had been the cautious policy of this man's life to lay his plans, and bring them step by step to light; this caution and policy were now in their full vigour; he instantly changed his measures, all the impenetrable prudence which had frosted over his features before the
Earl

Earl entered, vanished; the silk handkerchief which gave him, purposely, a ruffian-like appearance to Lady Meredith, now served to rub an uncommon redness into his eyes—he followed the Earl into the garden, where he found him recovering and soothing the poor Ellen, who no sooner saw Mr. Morgan, than she shrieked out, “Oh, save me, my dear Lord, from that wicked man.”

Mr. Morgan bowed to the ground.

“What man, my Ellen; be composed, nobody shall hurt you.”

“But he will hurt my grandpapa, he will kill my dear grandmamma, he is going to turn us all out of Code Gwyn, and take our house from us, and my uncle will be obliged to keep us at the parsonage: Pray, my dear Lord, if it is at all in your power,” and she slid down on her knees.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel turned pale with astonishment; he knew the rapacity of Morgan's character, the fawning servility of his deportment had not imposed *on him*; he penetrated the thin disguise of affected humility, and never deigned to take the smallest notice of him, except what his own sense of politeness enforced, when he sometimes joined the hunt, and partook his public dinner.

Mr. Morgan again bowed very low, "My Lord, I humbly crave your Lordship —"

The Earl, impatient to administer consolation to the venerable matron within, as well as to set at rest the heart of Ellen, requested Mr. Morgan would go to Castle Howel directly, promised to follow him in six minutes, and having hastily consigned Ellen to the care of Lady Margaret, immediately joined the Merediths.

The result of a very short conversation was, Mr. Meredith's getting into the carriage with

with his Lordship, who begged the ladies would take tea at the parsonage, and he would return to escort them home.

Lady Meredith, though never in London, had an inbred politeness, that rendered her the ornament of whatever society she was in; she apologized, with a truth and grace that spoke to the heart, for the scene they had witnessed; and desired Ellen to make tea: The old ladies, charmed with the appearance of her health and vivacity, were exceedingly pleased both with their company and repast, and though it was nine before the carriage returned, they were far from thinking the time tedious.

Mr. Meredith's dark and expressive eyes shewed the essence of meekness and good humour, three hours before they had streamed in sympathy, with the sorrow of a beloved parent—they now beamed with placidity and content; He apologized to the ladies for his stay, after he had in silence pressed the hand
of

of his mother to his lips, and to his heart, and with a look of unutterable tenderness folded Ellen in his arms. Lady Meredith perceived a change in their favor; and Ellen, inexperienced as she was, concluded Lord Castle Howel was the good genius of the hour:—The old ladies had invited her to accompany them, but the carriage brought Mr. Meredith without the Earl, or an intimation her company was desired. She was delighted at the sight of her Patron at such a critical period, relying implicitly on the goodness of his heart, and easy in the confidence of his power; but, strange as it may appear, his offer of marriage never occurred to her mind; it had astonished, and, for the moment, perplexed her, but the entire silence on the subject, observed by all the family, the parental character in which Lord Castle Howel had become so dear and respectable, so kindly reassumed at the parsonage, together with some secret ideas, totally averse to marriage with *him*, had expelled an event so transient and unexpected.

When

When the coach drove up to Code Gwyn, Winifred waited to receive her mistress with more meaning than was usually discernable in her large black eyes; and, not a usual thing, close behind stood old Griffiths and his sister, with an equal quantity of treasured wisdom in theirs.

Mrs. Griffiths whispered Lady Meredith, and old Griffiths taking the Reverend by the button, led him across the hall in close confab.

Ellen had ascended half the stairs, with Winifred in attendance, when Lady Meredith desired she would accompany her, in the parlour. It was very seldom Ellen thought of the right or wrong in her grandmother's commands, and still seldomer, she disobeyed them; she turned with alacrity, and then for the first time, saw something more than usual in the looks of her servant.

“Cot

"Cot ples your dear soul, co into your room, here has been the tivel to pay, Cot save us," whispered Winifred.

"What's the matter?" asked Ellen.

Now if any of the young ladies, (supposing this story should have the honor to be perused by such) has known what it is to think particularly well of a young male acquaintance, and should fancy the secret was known only to themselves, such young ladies will know, on all occasions of surprise, fear, or joy, the mind instantly reverts to the *favoured object*, and concludes, he is in some degree or other connected with it.

Percival Evelyn stood before Ellen's mental eye, as she uttered, "The what's the matter?"

"Ellen, you are waited for," said Lady Meredith.

"Cot

"Cot Almighty pless us, they won't let us speak—I have had a letter."

"From Percival?"

"No, as Cot is my judge, Miss, from his petters."

"Ellen, you are not used to keep my mother waiting," said Mr. Meredith gravely.

"There now, tivel take it, the Reverent must put in his hore!"

Percival's betters, thought Ellen, as she turned quick down stairs.

Lady Meredith and her son were already with Sir Arthur : The heart of affection when it has joyful tidings to communicate, is generally very brief, there needs no rhetoric, no ornament of speech to varnish a tale of happiness. Lady Meredith was weeping in the arms of her husband—Mr. Meredith and his
two

two sisters were kneeling at his feet, their joyful emotions divided betwixt thankfulness to heaven, and gratitude to him who had been the blessed means of saving them from distress; Miss Meredith and Ellen joined the rest of the family; the servants caught the enthusiasm; it was Sunday, and therefore there was no dance, but the old harper struck up, "Of a noble race was Shenkin." All was harmony and good humour 'till after supper, when Winifred being summoned, Mrs. Griffiths stationed behind Lady Meredith's chair, as her brother was behind Sir Arthur's, and the rest of the domestics dismissed, her Ladyship took a letter out of her pocket, and requested her son to read it.

Winifred, half crying and half scolding, her usual way of argument, protested against this, For why? The Reverent had no controul over her, she was twenty-one years of age, and, moreover, as good as a married woman,

"A

"A married woman!" exclaimed Sir Arthur.

"I mean by contraction," answered Winifred, pertly, "Cot safe me, tis fery hard I can't receif a letter without all this hollobolo."

Mr. Meredith, who had been running his eye over the paper, now turning sternly, converted the voluble part of her argument into tears and loud fobs."

"When you receive letters in which the honor of any part of this family is concerned, you are answerable to us all; how dare you, or your correspondent, presume to name Ellen Meredith in your scrawls?"

Ellen's first suspicion, that Percival was the source of all this bustle, recurred with additional force; conscious that she thought of little but *him*, her natural inference was, that his thoughts were as busy about her. Winifred had confessed she had entered into a kind of league

league with him, and though, when absent in England, he had no means of reminding her of her promise, yet it was not unlikely he would do it, when he heard they were returned to Cwrt Gwyn. This idea in her head, she sat blushing, while Sir Arthur, and indeed all the family, were impatiently urging Mr. Meredith to read the letter, which, after drawing his chair nearer, hewing, and snuffing the candles, he began as follows.

"Mi dearest Miss Winifred."

Ellen ventured to look up, *that* could not be Percival. *style to her* servant.

Mr. Meredith went on.

"Mi art is broke by your cruel unkindness, and mi Lord's art is as bad hoff,"

"Broke tear Mr. Joseph," sobbed Winifred.

Ellen

Ellen looked amazed.

Mr. Meredith resumed.

"We came to Bath, all to see our true lovers, and Madam Forrest told us the bitter news that you was fals arted."

"A wicked woman," sobbed Winifred.

"Indeed, Winifred," said Ellen, "you are very impertinent, I wonder how you dare call Mrs. Forrest a wicked woman?"

"Why did she call me fals arted, Miss; tell me but that? Cot safe me, what's coot for the coos is coot for the canter."

"Silence," said Sir Arthur, sternly, "go on, son."

"Which was the more bitter to me, has my Lord has got a promise of an exciseman's place for me, where of we might have a comfortable

fortable being of our own, and moreover kept our little farm too."

Winifred gave Mrs. Griffiths a nod, "you see, aunt —."

"And my Lord has been beautifying his fine seat, and new gilding, and painting, and laying out the ground, all for a sarten young ledy, that shall be nameless."

Every eye was now fixed on Ellen, but as Ellen returned the look without a trait of confusion, Mr. Meredith went on.

"For, you know, Winifred, I never tell secrets, but my Lord can think of nothing, nor talk of nothing, but Miss Meredith."

"No more he can, I'll take my affitavit," cried Winifred.

"Any more than I can of my dear Winifred, and certainly we shall both die, if you break your vows and promises."

"Oh, Cot forbit. Amen! amen!"

"So now I bag if you have a sparkittle of love for your poor constant Joseph, you will write me word, by the return of post, as follows: Why you went in such a hurry from Bath? what you are now doing? whether that sauntering fellow, Evelyn, is still with the prig of a parson?"

Mr. Meredith stopped, and as poor Winifred, notwithstanding her partiality for Joseph, and her good thoughts, through him, of his Lord, really loved and respected all the Code Gwyn family, she could not hear the last sentence without feeling the utmost confusion.

"The prig of a parson!" repeated Sir Arthur.

"Aye,

"Aye aye, aye aye," cried old Griffiths, shaking his white locks over Sir Arthur's shoulder, "this is a brave husband you have got, huffey, who makes his game of God's minister."

"Of our Reverent!" added Mrs. Griffiths, with a look of horror.

"The fauntering fellow, Evelyn," said Mr. Meredith, resentfully.

"I wonder what poor Percival has done to him," joined Ellen.

"Go on, go on, my dear brother," said Mary, "this will be a charming subject for me to write Miss Jones."

"And whether you tell Miss Meredith, how dear my Lord loves her, and whether she loves him ever so little, and whether she has any other sweetheart, and whether you

can persuade her to come with you to the coppice to meet my Lord and I."

"What does the man mean?" cried Ellen, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Meet him! a miscreant! it is out of the practice of romance to meet a man by appointment!" said Miss Catherine, in an accent of disgust.

"Is there any more?" asked Lady Meredith, impatiently.

"Only the signature — Your loving husband, tell deth, Joseph Wilks."

"Meet in the coppice," said Mr. Meredith, "then I suppose this worthy spouse elect of yours, was apprehensive Mr. Evelyn would be fauntering in the way of his noble employer and himself."

Winifred

Winifred had not a word to say, the prig of a parson struck her dumb; but her tears were always ready, those she shed in great abundance.

“Oh, thou shame of thy family,” said old Griffiths, with indignation, “thou viper, not only to abuse the noble blood that nourished thee, but join a rag-a-muffin of a footman to seduce sweet Miss Ellen to be ruined.”

Of this accusation Winifred knew herself to be innocent; her own vanity confirmed every profession made by her lover, not once had she suspected either the honesty or sincerity of his addresses, and Ellen being beyond comparison the most beautiful creature she had ever seen, and being sincerely attached to her, it was natural to suppose her charms had, at least, made as indelible an impression on Lord Claverton; indeed, as Joseph had said and sworn it, the matter was so far past doubt, that had they continued at Bath 'till his Lordship's arrival, and he proposed, as was

intended, a double elopement, neither the danger or impropriety of the measure would have prevented her. Innocent therefore as to intention, and of an irritable temper, she entered into a vindictive explanation, in the course of which, by her defence both of her lover and his Lordship, she discovered to the family, what was entirely hid from herself—that Joseph and his Lord were pursuing a regular concerted plan, which, but for the sudden recall from Bath might have ended in the ruin of both mistress and maid: But, as it nevertheless appeared she was the innocent dupe of secret villany, she was consigned to the reprimands of her uncle and aunt.

“What ben’t I to undress Miss Ellen?” cried she, as she was leaving the room.

“Not ’till you are sensible of the errors of your conduct,” answered Lady Meredith.

It

It was now too late to enter into any farther discussion of the letter with Ellen, but the occurrences of the day were of too interesting a nature to permit the other part of the family to part, before every particular had been canvassed over among them.

John Morgan, the rich 'squire, who, as Catherine described him, bought every body's estates, and lived in a corner of his own house, feared by many, respected by few, and loved by none, left his native village, Code Gwyn, an indigent adventurer; his father, a dissolute pauper of the Parish, got the then Rector, who had taken some pains in having his son taught reading and writing, to recommend him to a person of respectable connexions, of that country, who was then a successful and opulent Merchant in London. Martin, the paternal name of the now 'Squire, was fortunately engaged by Mr. Morgan as under porter, where he ingratiated himself first into the good opinion of his master, a plain fair meaning man, who raised him from his me-

nial servant to his principal trust in the business, and next into the heart of his only child. Miss Morgan was motherless, and her father's excessive fondness, by keeping her constantly at home, deprived her of the advantage she would have imbibed by associating with well educated young women.

Martin was handsome, and, even then, could bow very low where occasion suited: He did not run away with Miss Morgan, but he took care to alarm her father with fears for her life, if he refused his consent. The old man had a good deal of Cambrian pride about him, he withstood his daughter's entreaties, but her tears conquered him, and he consented to their marriage. Martin succeeded Mr. Morgan in his business, and buried his wife the same year, by whom he had an only daughter, who, in hopes of making a woman of fashion, he kept at a capital boarding school 'till she was eighteen, when his father-in-law, who had retired to his estate at Code Gwyn some years, died, leaving all his fortune to him,

him, and his granddaughter, on condition of their taking the name of Morgan, which, as that of Martin was by no means deficient in notoriety, and Code Gwyn the place his vanity wished to shine at, notwithstanding his mean origin, was a very acceptable clause in a will that left him, with his own savings, one of the richest men in Britain, and as soon as an act of parliament changed John Martin to John Morgan, he took possession.

Elizabeth Morgan was mild, sensible, and virtuous; she accompanied her father to Code Gwyn, and the late Mr. Morgan having lived in habits of friendship with the Merediths, Edmund, just then returned from College, fell passionately in love with her: Sir Arthur would not hear of a connexion so degrading, notwithstanding the immense wealth of her father, and his views were much higher for his daughter.

Mr. Meredith honored his parents, and inherited their pride of blood; but, spite of all

his efforts, to conquer his attachment, it increased with every interview.

Sir Arthur's objection was an affront, though he was as much averse to the match as himself, Mr. Morgan secretly vowed never to forgive.

The young lady was far from encouraging Mr. Meredith's passion, though she was in habits of intimacy with the Miss Merediths, then about her own age.

Her pleasant manners and sweetness of temper conquered the dislike the neighbourhood entertained against her father; every body took notice of and invited her to their houses, and she was a frequent and favorite guest of Lady Margaret Howel's. The fair Elizabeth flattered the hopes and pride of her father; he knew enough of the world to be sure his daughter with 80,000*l.* would be received into families, whose blood might be traced to the Conqueror, though the poor
proud

proud Code Gwyn family, had the impertinence to remember his leaving the hovel in which he was born, to seek better bread than they gave his parents; fond of the aggrandizements of his daughter, she never made a connexion he did not immediately canvas in every light, to try whether it promised to lead to the desired point.

The first glance from the eyes of Elizabeth determined the fate of our young parson. Naturally of a studious pensive turn, his mind retreated from futile amusements: He studied much before he saw Miss Morgan, and after he had seen her, she mixed in every sentiment, and he saw her in every line he read: He had a little taste for drawing, her face, in all attitudes, ornamented his study, her eyes were penciled on the margins of even his sermons, and he wrote the initials of her name in the blank leaves of all his books: His walks were within sight of the house, and if, after a ramble of three or four hours, he saw Elizabeth, he returned satisfied. This often

happened, for all her amusements were solitary walks, in the most sequestered parts of the neighbourhood; but her health grew daily worse: Her father, angry at the ravage sickness made in her lovely countenance, and alarmed at the consequence, instead of soothing, reproached, and threatened the fair invalid. He took it into his head Meredith was the secret source of her disorder, and vowed to give his fortune to hospitals, and turn her out of doors, if she thought of that beggarly parson.

Elizabeth wept and trembled, without answering her stern father, who, as her health still declined, became every day more fretful.

Meredith, shocked at the change in her looks, and unable to conceal the anguish of his soul, often absented himself from her and became a prey to despair: During one of these self-inflicted penances, he was surprised by an abrupt visit from Mr. Morgan, who
vociferously

vociferously charged him with having stole his daughter from his house that morning.

The surprise and grief which took possession of Mr. Meredith's countenance were proofs sufficient of his innocence ; and Morgan, forgetting for a minute his animosity, informed him, that his daughter, after bidding him in a more tender than common manner good night, had gone early to rest ; that, in the morning, on her not coming to breakfast, he searched her apartments, where she had not been in bed ; that on opening her wardrobe, they found she had taken best part of her cloaths ; and, in fine, that she had left his house.

Our parson's countenance brightened at this : So visible and increasing had been her dejection, he had, at first the strongest apprehensions for her fate ; but she lived, and he trusted had happiness in pursuit, not, indeed, *with him*, that was self evident ; but *self* was not in this interesting hour attended to !—

Morgan

Morgan secretly triumphed over the parson, who, he conceived must be terribly galled at the disappointment; and he became more reconciled to the elopement of his daughter, since he found the poor Meredith was not her companion: He, however, immediately set off for town, but though enquiries nor even money was spared to discover her, she was not heard of 'till eight months after, when he received anonymous information, that the corpse of his daughter lay at a house on Highgate hill, from whence he was requested to take it for interment.

It was not in human nature for a father to be unmoved in such a situation; he hastened to the place and found his only child dead: The people of the house were strangers to her and her connexions; she had been removed there for air, a month had been paid in advance for the lodging, and a man and woman servant had attended her, who disappeared within an hour after she died; and though every thing about her bore the appearance of elegance,

elegance, and even affluence, they had so dexterously managed, as to escape without suspicion of their intention, 'till, after a violent bustle, a silence, which continued more than an hour, induced the landlady to open the chamber door, where she found the lady dead, and the apartment cleared of every thing that could possibly lead to a discovery of the thieves, for that they had been guilty of theft admitted not a doubt.

Mr. Morgan wept and raved as he contemplated the corpse of his child; and after passing two hours in vain regrets he had ever been a father, almost distracted, left the scene of mortality. But tho' change of place could not remove the reproach from his mind, which he endeavoured to appease, by such a ridiculous parade of funeral grandeur, as served to gratify his own vanity, and swell the undertaker's bill: But the deceased left a more lasting monument of his hard heart than the expensive one he placed to her memory in the parish church where she died: He libe-

rally rewarded the people of the house, and paid them a high price for their good report; he took every possible means to conceal the harshness of his conduct from the world, and making a precipitate end of his concerns in town, hastened to his Welch mansion, where, he flattered himself, the event would not be known. But rumour, with his hundred tongues, told the fate of the young Elizabeth in a thousand different ways—Meredith heard all, and found one sad certainty, the woman who possessed his warm heart was no more; a fever seized his brain, followed by a nervous debility that totally incapacitated him from performing his functions, and for three years left his spirits quite sunk, his health impaired and all his affection for woman buried with his adored Elizabeth.

Mr. Morgan's regret for the untimely death of his daughter was changed into a detestation of her memory, by some discoveries made in applications to him after her death; he never would hear her name mentioned, and, dead

dead to every generous feeling, devoted his life to the accumulation of riches, and the gratification of his passions—he was in the constant habit of lending money to people in distressed circumstances, and of conceiving a vicious inclination for modest women, and it was not seldom he made the husband and father give good security for money he pretended to advance to the charms of the wife or daughter.

The Code Gwyn estate groaned for the axe, no wood had been cut but for domestic use for more than a century back, it was, as poor Brown would have said, “full of capabilities.” The manor was extensive, the ground rich, and finely laid out; the mansion house, it is true, was out of repair, but Mr. Morgan’s keen eye ran it over, he knew how little, with the old materials, and wood and lime on the premises, it would cost to build a new one; then, to turn the haughty Meredith’s out of their vaunted antient home, was a gratification which he never lost sight of! He
insinuated.

insinuated himself into Sir Arthur's confidence by an affected gratitude for the charities bestowed on his family, and in the zeal of apparent friendship, supplied the easy improvident Baronet with sum after sum, 'till, like a thunderbolt, the notice of foreclosure shewed them the gulph before them ; and the wolf, having gained his point, dropped his sheep's skin.

Mr. Morgan, not content with ruining the Code Gwyn family, vented the concealed rancour of his heart in reproaches and insults, and these were so often repeated, that they reconciled themselves to the removing to the parsonage, to avoid any further intercourse with their narrow minded creditor :— Yet, to leave the house where their ancestors lived and died, to break up their family, to take the bread and asylum from their grey-headed domestics, to assign a set of honest dependants to the mercy of a rapacious miser, to become a tax on the duty of their son, no longer to behold objects which time had endeared

deared to their view, was terrible. Every part of the family dreaded the impending misery, yet all were solicitous to conceal from each other their feelings.

The meeting of Mr. Morgan at the parsonage, was at the request of Mr. Meredith, whose last hope rested on a doubt old Griffiths had suggested, of Sir Arthur's right to mortgage one part of the estate; but the money had been advanced, and, therefore, however the point of law might stand, he was not of a turn to dispute payment, although he thought he might honorably avail himself of this suggested advantage so far, as to retain the possession of the manor during his parent's life; but he had to do with a man well acquainted with the honor, or, as he called it, the folly of his debtors.

The reader has seen the success of the meeting; we have now to follow them, from Mr. Meredith's account, to Castle Howel.

During

During the ride from Code Gwyn, Lord Castle Howel made himself master of the rapacious views of Mr. Morgan, as well as the supine negligence of the Merediths ; he well knew what money Mr. Morgan would advance was on perfect security, and worth any other person's while to do the same ; at all events, he resolved the house and grounds should be left in the possession of the old people for life, *that* being settled, he eagerly asked, if Ellen had yet been made acquainted with his proposals.

Mr. Meredith's answer to his Lordship's letter had not reached London before the impatience of the old ladies, to say nothing of his Lordship's, induced them to leave it ; the question, therefore, at such a period, was extremely embarrassing, as it must lead to an explanation, which might entirely frustrate all the plans the Earl had been concerting in their favor.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel observed his embarrassment, and felt it was no good augur for him. He was silent while Mr. Meredith was considering how to soften a refusal his natural frankness forbid him to conceal—but the more he considered the more he found himself at a loss.

The Earl, then, with a forced smile, said, he feared Ellen's heart was not in his cause, he saw he was rejected, but hoped she had not been urged too warmly—Mr. Meredith would forgive him—he meant in reference to the circumstances of the family.

Mr. Meredith coloured. “My Lord, you little know either Ellen or the family had they been capable of urging such a motive, I should have been spared the pain I feel in conveying to your Lordship—but I have written to you.”

“Forgive me,” answered the Earl, “we will say no more on the business,” and he turned

turned the conversation to the improvements on his own estate.

When Morgan was admitted, after what had been settled in the coach, Mr. Meredith was surprised to hear the Earl desire him to send the demands on the Code Gwyn estate to his attorney, and it should be paid.

Do I hear right, thought he—"The whole mortgage, my Lord?"

"What, you know I am not rich, and wonder to hear me talk of paying off mortgages? But I take this to be a good thing, or Morgan would not have it."

Morgan bowed the lower, to hide his chagrin, and Lord Castle Howel ordered a bottle of Madeira, "Come, Morgan," said he, "you are disappointed, I know, and to confess the truth, so am I, but here is a bumper, to better luck another time."

"My

"My Lord, I beg your Lordship to believe," again bowing.

"Believe, why I know it," replied the Earl, "but as I *will* pay the money, and as you *must* receive it, drink your glass and make the best of it."

Morgan could not possibly contradict an Earl, who was not in his debt, and therefore become quite friends with Mr. Meredith, and after begging his Lordship would not think of an attorney, in a business, which should be settled exactly as his Lordship pleased, humbly took his leave.

Meredith would have made acknowledgments, but the Earl forbid him, and without again mentioning Ellen they parted.

Every thing now went well at Code Gwyn, but this calm was of short duration, for David, whose wife had lived at Castle Howel, brought news that distressed them all, the Earl was indisposed.

disposed. Ellen, alarmed, was every hour for sending messengers to know if he was better—the answers, each more unfavorable than the other, pained her heart.

“If he should die!” said she to Lady Meredith, who was at that instant thinking of his disinterested kindness.

“Aye, my dear, if he should, you would know the value of the friend, the protector, you have rejected.”

Ellen protested no event would or could make her more sensible of his worth than she was at that moment.

“Would you not be grieved, then, my dear, to think, that instead of adding to his comforts, you had shortened his days?”

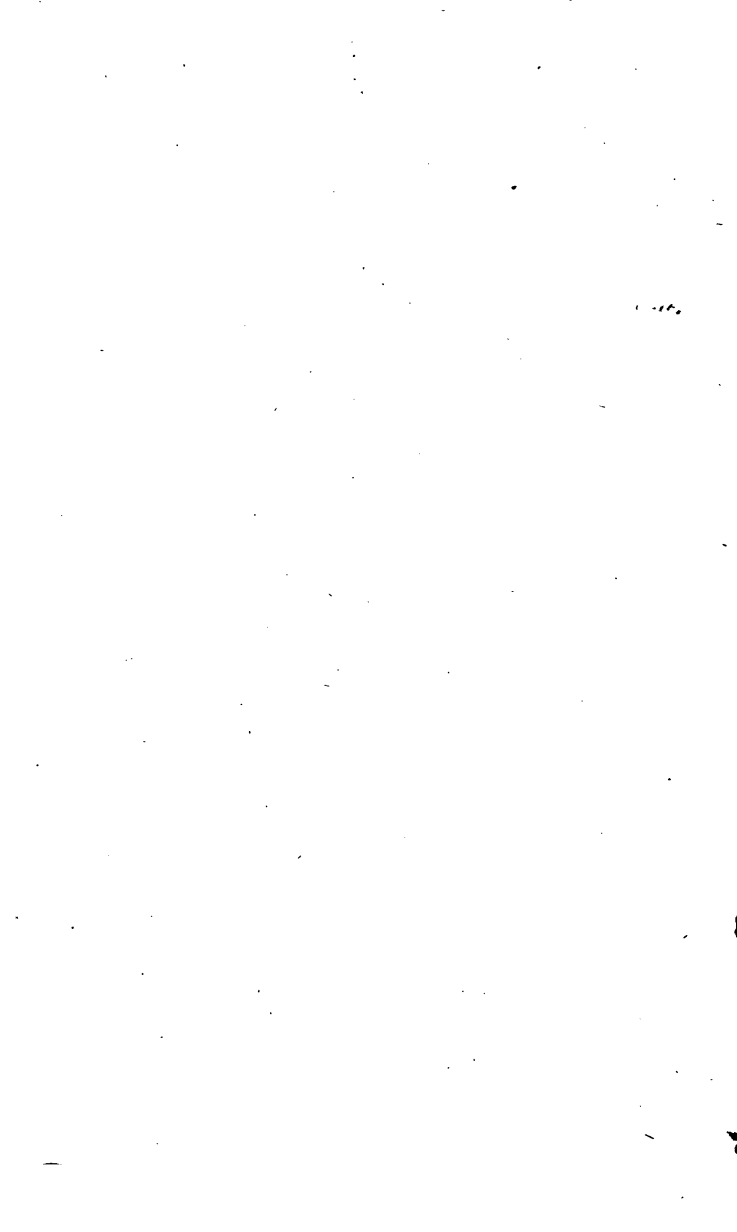
“Who, me, madam! Me shorten Lord Castle Howel’s days! Can you think me such a monster? Him, to whom I owe so much!

much ! who has been so good to *you*—No, I would die to give him comfort.”

“Die, Ellen,” cried the lively Mary, “if you give him comfort it must be in living for him !”

Lady Meredith sighed, Sir Arthur folded his hands, as he usually did when particularly moved ; Ellen threw herself at his feet, and in the instant she was embracing his knees, formed a resolution as strong as heroic.

END OF THE FIRST VOL.



ELLEN,
COUNTESS OF
CASTLE HOWEL,
A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By MRS. BENNETT.

“Others make men, I only report them.” MONTAIGNE.

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M DCC XCIV.



E L L E N,
COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWEL,

CHAP. I.

DEAR PERCIVAL,

“ I DARE say, *you* remember as well as
“ me, the last time I saw you, when we
“ were walking round our little garden, I
“ promised not to marry without you approved
“ it. I suppose you will think it very for-
“ ward in me to talk of such things, but you
“ know I was just turned of fifteen *then*, and
“ I am *now* seventeen, which makes a differ-
VOL. II. B “ ence,

“ence, tho’ still I think it a very foolish sub-
“ject for *me*, but here (I am almost ashamed
“to tell you) that Lord Castle Howel, who
“you know I dearly loved, wishes——I de-
“clare I am glad I am writing instead of
“speaking to you, for my cheeks burn like
“fire, and I am sure I hardly know what I
“write, but any thing is better than breaking
“ones word. Oh, Percival, we have had sad
“doings, what would you say, to see my poor
“grandpapa and grandmamma, and my uncle
“and aunts, and all of us turned out of Code
“Gwyn, and crammed into the Parsonage?
“poor old Griffiths and Susan cried themselves
“almost blind, for what you know could they
“do? And the old Harper must have gone
“to the parish, and that, as he says, would be
“a sad thing, for a man who had laced
“cloaths, and played before my grandpapa’s
“father, when he was knight of the shire, then
“there is the old Bailiff—but indeed none of
“these would be so bad off, as my grandpapa
“himself, for you know he loves a large
“room, where his chair can travel as he calls it,
and

“ and the largest room in the parsonage will
“ hardly hold us all to dine when he is not
“ there, and as to the poor dogs, there is no
“ kennel for them either, and my grandpapa
“ could not part with Bruin and Whitefoot;
“ as to me, I have not minded dogs since
“ Lord Claverton killed Lion, which you
“ know you gave me when he was very little,
“ and I was little too indeed. Well Percival,
“ but I dare say you are shocked as well as
“ me at the idea of my marrying, and yet
“ Lord Castle Howel has behaved so kind
“ to us all, and taken our estate out of the
“ power of Mr. Morgan, who is turned out
“ a very bad sort of a man, that I think you
“ would rather I married *him* than any body
“ *else* ; I wish he could marry one of my aunts,
“ I’m sure he would be very happy, and you
“ must know I have refused him, but he is
“ so good, and so ill, and tho’ my uncle
“ Meredith who oftener visits him, than any
“ of the family, wont say it—yet I know they
“ think he would be well and happy if I *re-*
“ *lented*, that’s an odd word you will think, but

" 'tis my aunt Catherine's, who is always using
 " odd words. Now dear Percival, I should
 " break my heart if Lord Castle Howel died,
 " but I would not save *his* life, by breaking my
 " promise to *you*, so pray answer me by return
 " of Post, and whatever becomes of Ellen
 " Meredith, she will always esteem and love
 " Percival Evelyn, and wish those happy days
 " they spent together, had not so soon been
 " over. Oh, Percival, our garden is in beau-
 " tiful order, I walk there till I am low spirit-
 " ed, and always leave it in tears, but dear
 " Percival advise me, tell me if you give
 " me up my promise."

ELLEN MEREDITH.

After hastily folding and sealing this letter,
 she recollected that she neither knew his ad-
 dress, nor how to get it to the next Post
 town unknown to the family, Winifred was
 the only resource in such an exigence, she
 was directed to get Evelyn's address from
 David, and as Winifred was rather hardened

as

as to consequences, vowed she would carry it to the post-office herself, "if it rained cats and togs, cot forgive her for saying so."—

Accordingly, away went Winifred to the Parsonage, and sure of David in any thing concerning Evelyn, desired him to direct the letter.

Since Winifred's disgrace, and the cause of it was known she became a person of much less consequence among the domestics of Code Gwyn and the Parsonage, David was sulky; how did he know but 'twas a trick to write to her London fellow, to carry Miss Ellen off.

Winifred was on the point of breaking out, but recollecting she should be betrayed to the family, called in her old auxiliary, *tears*, wondered how he could use an old friend so, asked if he thought Mr. Evelyn would be concerned in carrying off Miss Ellen? "No to be sure," was the surly answer, and

he took the pencil she offered and scrawled the direction.—

Poor Winifred's evil planet reigned; Mr. Meredith, from the study window, saw her trip over the field to the back wicket of the garden, she had at that period the misfortune to stand very low in his opinion, and, altho' knowing the integrity of David, he could not guess how he should be made a party in her treachery, yet he had no doubt but the letter he saw in her hand was one, designed for Lord Claverton's footman, and darting round, met her as she was coming out of the garden. Never was poor waiting damsel in such a fright, she had not power to hide the letter, but stood trembling with it in her hand, positively denying she had such a thing about her, till exasperated at her falsehood, he snatched it from her, but his astonishment and confusion nearly equalled hers, when instead of Joseph, he saw it addressed to Percival Evelyn.

“ And

“And who wrote this letter?” said he in a voice of rage.

“Cot Almighty knows, sir” answered Win, “for I am sure I never saw it in my pordays; tivel take me, but I believe ’tis all witchery.”

“Hold thy lying tongue,” cried Mr. Meredith, and calling to David and his maid, charged them to keep her prisoner, till his return from Code Gwyn whether he directly rode.—Ellen was walking in her beloved garden, and he was so lucky as to find his father and mother alone, his face was so clear an index of his mind that Lady Meredith saw something extraordinary had happened, before he produced the letter.

“Ah poor Ellen” exclaimed Lady Meredith, shewing the direction to Sir Arthur.

Mr. Meredith looked more surprised.

"Shall we open it" continued Lady Meredith.

"Certainly" answered her Son.

Sir Arthur examined the impression, it was a fine *Hope*, an appendage to the watch Lord Claverton had given her; his looks did not entirely approve of breaking the seal.

"It is justified, sir, by our regard to the honor of our family, and affection for this lovely branch of it; it is indeed necessary, for how are we sure, that poor ignorant creature, Winifred, is not, even in this measure, the dupe of some plan of Lord Claverton, whose libertine designs"—Mr. Meredith's colour rose as he spoke.

Lady Meredith broke the seal herself, at the same time assuring her son she had in *this* instance, no suspicion of Lord Claverton. When the letter was read, Sir Arthur folding his hands turned to his lady,

"What pity!" said he.

Lady

Lady Meredith did not answer.

“I did not suspect this” said her son, “but I am confident the letter may be sent to Percival”

“Oh, no ! poor lad,” answered Lady Meredith, “it is too much.”

“I am confident it may,” repeated Mr. Meredith, and he was justified in the assertion, by his thorough knowledge of the youth, whose mind he had formed to the practice of every social virtue ; he persisted in advising the letter to be sent, positively affirming from what he knew of his Elève’s disposition, that his answer would promote the object of their wish, more than all they could do.

Lady Meredith had not quite so much faith in the self denial of a young man of twenty-one, but she no longer opposed the

trial; Mr. Meredith returned with the letter to the Parsonage, and in the presence of Winifred sent his servant with it to the post town, telling her coldly, that when he took it from her, he suspected it was for her friend Joseph; but as it was for Mr. Evelyn, he had no business with it; he added, she need not say any thing to Ellen, and offered her half a crown. There were but two ways of bribing Winifred, one was a secret in the possession of Joseph Wilks, the other in that of Percival Evelyn; she put the half crown scornfully on the table.

“Not tell my mistress, but, as Cot shall save me I will, if I lose my life for it.”

Mr. Meredith smiled at the pert toss of her head, as she left the Parsonage,—but after all, and when she had made the very most of the story, Ellen was neither surprised nor alarmed, indeed she had wished, she said, (she knew not why) to conceal it from the family; but that was foolish, for as his answer

swer must come by post to Code Gwyn, it could not be kept secret, but none of these reasons, which she explained to Winifred, could satisfy *her*, she protested against the behaviour of the Reverend, and vowed the house was, "Cot pless her, no better as a prison."

A tedious eight days passed before Percival's answer arrived. In that interval Lord Castle Howel had been thought in some danger from a low fever, the old ladies (alarmed at his situation, and provoked at the assurance of a little country Miss's refusing the offered hand of the Earl of Castle Howel,) were constantly urging a fresh choice, and teasing both him and themselves by their impatience to return to London, where each of them had pointed out, among their acquaintance, young brides in abundance, whose mothers, aunts, and cousins, were remarkable for the number of children they brought into this wicked world; to these arrangements Lord Castle Howel turn-

ed a listless ear, his choice had been made, with too much real feeling, to be soon transferred, and he was convinced, by the pain her rejection inflicted on him, that the early impression Ellen had made on his mind, was as much the result of passion as philanthropy; he dwelt on her perfections, the joy which darted from her eyes, when she saw him at the Parsonage, the confidence with which she disclosed her sorrows, and asked his assistance, was ever before him, not having then received Mr. Meredith's letter, he was transported to receive so many proofs of affection from her, and the disappointment was from that circumstance more bitter, the agitation of his mind increased by the old Maderia, of which he had drank several bumpers, without recollecting it was a liquor, he had not accustomed himself to, at an hour he usually idled away at the tea table, threw him into a fever, but he was now recovering his health, tho' with a langour on his spirits, that was very distressing to the two spinsters.

On

On the eighth day the expected letter arrived at Code Gwyn, Winifred was on the look out, tho' not, as she flattered herself, unobserved, for as the connexions of the family at the mansion, with the great world were very circumscribed; what few letters came, were left at the Parsonage, but *this* Mr. Meredith chose should go to the house by the Postman.

Ellen was reading "Zadig" to Sir Arthur and Lady Meredith, and the two aunts were sitting at work, when Winifred entered, pretending to look for something; it was post day, Ellen understood Percival's answer was come. Oh! what did that answer contain? her voice faltered, her colour went and came, she trembled—Zadig dropped on the floor.—

Mr. Meredith, as if by accident, came in, and in his usual expressive face Lady Meredith saw the intelligence just convey'd by Winifred.

"What's

"What's the matter with Ellen," demanded he, "is she not well?"

"No —yes, not quite, I—

"Are you fatigued with reading?" my dear, said Sir Arthur.

"A little, I believe."

Lady Meredith advised a walk in the air, Ellen gladly rose and ran up stairs.

Winifred followed, threw the letter on the table, and vanished.—

Ellen locked her door, and took up the letter—she knew the hand—her eyes filled—she trembled and laid it down again—after a shower of tears, again she took up the important letter—but wanting resolution to open it, again it was laid on the table—she walked to the window—her heart beat violently—she traversed the room; and became more composed—again the letter was resumed—she examined the seal—it was a
plain

plain cypher of E—"dear Evelyn" whispered she, and pressed it to her lips—she carefully tore the paper round the seal and opened the letter—its contents were short. She read,

"What advice can poor Percival Evelyn,
 "the child of bounty, the object of charity,
 "give his adored Ellen Meredith, your promise
 "Ellen is no more—I give it up—you
 "are free—let your heart be your monitor,
 "but whatever your situation or mine may in
 "future be, remember, while I have life, you
 "have one sure unchangeable friend, who will
 "rejoice in your prosperity, and on whose
 "poor all, both of soul and power, you may in
 "adversity depend."

"P. E."

An agony of tears succeeded the reading of this letter, and it would be hard to say, whether she was pleased or displeased at its contents—he had given back a promise, she considered as the only obstacle to her rendering

dering her own and the Castle Howel family happy—but she did not feel more happy *herself* for this enfranchisement, she wept over her liberty, and grieved that she had asked it,—dinner was announced—she could not eat, and begged to be excused going down—her request was complied with, Mr. Meredith guessed rightly the purport of the letter, and it was judged delicate and proper to submit to herself, the manner in which she would bear the first disappointment of her heart.—

Tea time came, Ellen was still in her room—a carriage drove up—she heard it, and all over nerve, ran trembling to the window, Lady Margaret alighted.

“My fate is determined” said she bursting into a fresh flood of tears. Lady Meredith knocked at the door “Lady Margaret Howel my dear is come to take leave of you, and has brought you a number of fine things, how is your head? will you come down?”

Ellen

Ellen accepted her offered hand, and looking up met Lady Meredith's eye, so humid, so compassionate, so tender, she threw her arms round her neck and could only sob.

"My Mamma, my dear, my only Mother, pity your poor Ellen;" "Pity!" replied the venerable matron, "I admire, I almost envy my child."

Ellen pointed to the letter.

"Do you mean, I should read that letter my child?"

"Not now, but take it with you, and never let me see it again."

"My heroic child," said the fond parent embracing her.—

Encouraged by the sweet voice of maternal approbation, and self assured, by the consciousness of a sacrifice so dear, a modest blush

blush suffusing her cheek, she followed her respectable relation into the parlour.

Lady Margaret saluted her, with rather a constrained politeness, and answered her anxious enquiries after the Earl, with a cold and formal bow; her brother she said requested Miss Meredith would do him the honor to accept a few trifling remembrances he had brought to Castle Howel for her; these trifles were a profusion of fine laces, muslins, and other elegant materials for female dress. The Miss Merediths, could not help admiring them article by article, but as Ellen sat lost in thought, Lady Margaret continued, ---The Earl "lamented he could not take a personal leave of the family, Sir Arthur will tell you Miss, how much my brother is your friend; he regrets he is *only* your friend."

Ellen was still silent.

Mr. Meredith hoped the neighbourhood were not going to lose them immediately.

The Ladies, Gertrude and Frances, would not, she answered, perhaps ever see Wales again, and they were naturally desirous of visiting some very old friends, this was probably the only unengaged day, and she had taken it to pay a farewell visit at Code Gwyn.

The family were properly sensible of the honor, but Ellen was still silent.

Lady Margaret took one dish of tea, made her exit with a few fashionable courtesys, and was handed to her carriage by Mr. Meredith, who stood some time looking after the chariot, in a reverie, from which he was roused, by an invitation to walk with Ellen, she led to her little Garden, where with swimming eyes, and plaintive voice she pointed to his notice, the beautiful shrubs, and flowers, the cypher and every ornament, love had contrived to adorn it: without seeming to observe the effect the fond reverie had on her mind, he liberally praised both
the

the plan, and cultivation of the charming spot; they had now walked round, and returned to the entrance, Ellen looked alternately at her uncle, and at the garden, she put her spread hand before her eyes, but the trickling tears would not be concealed, she hastily quitted the garden, and locking the little wicket, requested he would give the key to Evelyn.

Mr. Meredith took the key in an attentive silence, and accompanied her back to the house; as she turned to the stairs, he kissed his hand, and motioned towards the Parlour, she stop'd, he saw her heart was struggling with itself, "have you done with me my dear Ellen?" said he in a voice of sympathy.

After a moment's hesitation,

"No sir," she replied, "If you have patience."—He instantly followed into the gallery, where with a graceful modesty she opened
her

her heart; confessed that from the moment she knew she had affections, they were placed on Percival Evelyn, told him of her promise, her letter, and his answer; lamented Lord Castle Howel had made a choice so unworthy of him, that he had not continued her friend, and protector, “but what” added she in an elevated tone and gesture, “what is the whole life of such an insignificant as me, compared to one hour of so good a man as Lord Castle Howel, of my dear venerable parents, of my aunts, and of you my dear worthy uncle; you who are the orphan’s friend, and the father of the fatherless, from this moment I devote all my little faculties to gratitude and to duty,—you will still love Percival and advise him to his good.—If the Earl will accept me, and if you my dear uncle will tell him, I have *now* no will but his.”—She stopped and paused.

Mr. Meredith looked at her with pleasure and admiration, but not with surprise, her conduct was exactly what he expected
would

would be the result of her letter to Percival, but though it was of more importance than he chose himself to think on, he forebore to commend, or even answer, what she had said; and only seriously replied, he was at her devotion, and would say or do whatever she wished.—

“Then I believe, sir, I believe I have said enough for Lord Castle Howel, but do you, my uncle, my friend, excuse me to the dear assembly in the Parlour, say every thing for me; but I, indeed I cannot see them to night.” Mr. Meredith embraced and left her.—

The pleasure this communication gave the Code Gwyn family may be conceived; besides making their situation happy, Ellen, the pride, the darling of their hearts, would be secured from distress, and an earnest of the same security to themselves; she would be a Countess! and the charms of mind, and person, which so delighted *them*, could not fail

fail of exciting general esteem; Lady Meredith cautioned her family, not to shew an excess of joy, "we must," said the considerate parent, "respect the sacrifice, tho' we rejoice it is made."

Mr. Meredith executed his welcome commission, with delicate propriety. The Earl embraced him with warmth, and put a diamond of value on his finger,---Lady Gertrude took a pair of gold buckles, out of her own shoes, which had been her father's, and insisted on his wearing them. Lady Frances had a locket set with brilliants, in which was a lock of beautiful auburn hair, which she said was cut from her own head, *a very few years back*, he must take that for *her* sake.---Lady Margaret contented herself, with bestowing on him many *precious words*, the projected visits were given up, the coach ordered, and the Ladies returned with Mr. Meredith to visit their destined relation.

Nothing

Nothing could be kinder than the Ladies, nothing more engaging than the fair Ellen, an immediate return of the visit was pressed by Lady Margaret, in consideration of the Earl's health, and the blushing Ellen consented to be of the party.

The next day, Lord Castle Howel had the happiness to receive his young bride elect, at his Castle; and that day month was blessed with her hand at Code Gwyn church, every house of entertainment within ten miles of Castle Howel, and Code Gwyn, were open'd on the joyful occasion. The two spinsters vied with each other in brilliant presents to the bride, in honor to their family, and in private benefactions to the poor, in honor to themselves.

This splendid wedding, of which Winifred had not the smallest expectation, almost turned her brain, not that Ellen's advance in rank, or riches, was a matter of any wonder, for nothing in this world, or indeed in the
next,

next, could, in her opinion, equal the deserts of the mistress she perfectly adored; but, as Ellen was too much attached to her old favourite, to exchange her, notwithstanding her want of skill in the mysteries of the toilette, for a very clever young person, who was an adept,---the consequence and advantages, she derived from her situation, were more than the equilibrium of her little mind could well bear.

The Earl, charmed with every movement of a heart, where innocence and honor so entirely presided; was also partial to the oddities of Winifred; he insisted on her being retained, with the more regular lady's maid, and that *she* should have the pre-eminence.——

Sir Arthur Meredith, now at ease in his circumstances, his beloved grand-daughter, so happily established, his Lady happy and gratified, felt himself renovated. The ladies dressed better, the servants were again merry,

Mr. Jones, the apothecary, who had withdrawn his visits, when a certain fore-closure, was in agitation, now renewed his attendance at the Mansion, and Mr. Morgan's bow was more frequent, and lower than ever, tho' all intercourse with the family was declined on their part. As to the Castle Howels, they, as is usual with people of quality, who are at the top of happiness, wanted to be still happier. The old Ladies had not been many years from home, and now the object of their journey was in part obtained, they wished to accompany the young Countess to London; to go to court, see the public places, and visit their old friends. Lady Margaret had wishes too, but though not exactly the same as her aunts, yet as they ultimately pointed London-ward, she chose to echo them.

Lady Castle Howel, whose lively disposition we have before mentioned, found elegance, affluence, rank and all the luxurious appendages sit vastly easy on her. She heard
too

too much of the metropolis, and all its fascinations to object going there; besides, the Ladies who were perfect mistresses of etiquette, insisted her presentation at court was an indispensable ceremony, attached to her rank; and the Earl was too proud of his charming bride, and too much gratified by the admiration she excited, to wish to hide her in the mountains of Wales; a grand retinue was therefore ordered, and the day fixed for their departure.

But, although Ellen was now every inch a Countess, she had not forgot her duty and love, for the dear circle at Code Gwyn; she asked the Earl's permission to take her maid and spend one day with them, previous to her departure.——

It was bleak December, the days short, and unpleasant, and the road bad; the Earl existed but in the sight of his beautiful wife, but her gratification was dearer to him than his own—he advised her to stay

the night, with her beloved relations—the family he observed were so worthily united, they would have a thousand little nothings to say, which a stranger would restrain; “enjoy your good friends, my Ellen, visit the scenes dear to your infant affection, speak kindly to your old domestics, assure your venerable parents, I consider them as mine, and will receive you a second time from them myself, to-morrow.”

The Countess felt the kindness of this plan, and charmed her Lord, by her sensible acknowledgments.—The Code Gwyn family were apprized of her visit, and an universal holiday prevailed; Mr. Meredith dined, but would not sleep at Code Gwyn; the Countess remonstrated, “the night was dark and cold, and it was the last she should pass there”—he was not to be prevailed on, but said, he would be ready for his breakfast next morning, before she left her room.—

When Winifred attended to undress her, she was remarkably silent, and on being in-

terrogated by her Lady, as to the *cause*, protested, that "she believed, the tivel had always something to do at Code Gwyn;" I desire, my Lady, you will ax me no questions, for as cot shall judge me, if I speak, they will cill me, and if I don't, I shall purst"—"Well," replied the Countess, "I want to know none of your secrets, I [suppose you have heard from your old sweet-heart."

"Ay, Ay, well, well, cot pless, and save old sweet hearts, I say, amen, amen, pray cot—name o cot, I am not afraid of apparitions, if people will preak their hearts, and tie, other people can't help it, cot forgive us all—our sins, and our iniquities."——

"You are very pious to night, Winifred."

"No, cot help me, I must not speak, put if I was to tell your Ladyship."——

"I won't hear another word," said the Countess, sportively.

Winifred fighed, and went away praying to cot, to forgive her sins.

The Earl was at Code Gwyn by two, and on account of the short days, declined staying dinner; they departed amid the tears, and benedictions of the family, and servants, the former from affection, the latter, partly from regard to their young mistress, and partly from the generosity of the Earl.—

The day was clear, and light, Ellen prattled away; the Earl “conversing with her, “forgot all time, all seasons, and their “change;” he was contemplating with delight the flattering change in her lovely countenance, which tho’ deluged with tears, at parting with her friends, was already restored to its usual serenity, when a scream, and exclamation from Winifred, who sat at the back of the coach, called all Ellen’s blood into her face, and turned him pale.

“Cot have mercy on us, pray cot, and
forgive

forgive our transgressions, avaunt fatan plese cot."

They were passing the Parsonage, it stood on the top of a steep hill, the weather had been frosty, and the drivers were obliged to slacken their pace ; Ellen bended forward, and saw the object that excited Winifred's exclamation.

Percival Evelyn, or rather the pale emaciated shadow, of what he *was*, stood at a chamber window, supported by David, watching with eager eyes the passing vehicle.

The Earl, extremely displeased, and attributing the agitation visible in Ellen, to Winifred's exclamation, asked sternly if she had seen a ghost.—

Certain recollections, at this moment particularly troublesome to poor Winifred, and a natural fear of ghosts, and hobgoblins, having heard that Mr. Evelyn was actually dying, levelled all distinction.

“Cot forgive you my Lort, - for using such pad worts, and plaft femys, but cot is abof the tivel ftill, and cot knows, what is a lort before fatan, any more then a poor finner, for cofts to be fhure if they wan’t to be tied in the red fea, may tear a lort to pieces with crace of cot.”

The wench is mad! exclaimed the Earl, The Countefs had by this time recovered her furprife, the fight of Percival, at fuch a period, and in fuch a fituation, fo unthought of, and fo unexpected, could not fail to agitate her; but a moment’s recollection convinced her of, the impropriety of fhewing the concern fhe felt for another man, in her husband’s prefence; that fhe *did feel it*—was an injury to her own peace, but to betray it, would be an infult to his honor—every foothing word from the Earl, was a reproach to her heart, and fhe had the heroifm to make a fecret vow, in that moment, never to mention, or hear mentioned, the name of Percival Evelyn; yet, not even the confcioufnefs
of

of acting right, could recompose her spirits, and she retired to her chamber, as soon as she alighted at Castle Howel.

Winifred was bursting to speak of Evelyn, "Oh, my Lady!" cried she, "did you see the poor tear dying Mr. Evelyn? who"—she was struck dumb with astonishment, when Ellen commanded her, on pain of utter displeasure, to avoid ever mentioning a name, *once so dear.*——

"Cot. be coot unto us, poor sinful pargury souls, what, not when he ties? as he certainly will, must not I speak, when he is dead and cone, in the peaceful crave, and his cost comes in a whirlwind, like a roaring lion?"

Living or dead, I will not hear him mentioned, answered Ellen, much agitated.

Winifred had patched up a kind of truce with her conscience, by resolving to make a confession, of some *secret* sins to her Lady, in which Mr. Evelyn's name *must* occur,

but Ellen's determined manner, deprived the poor penitent of this consolation, and she left her in such terror of mind, that she actually gave the dairy maid two yards of ribbon, *almost as good as new*, to fit up with her all night, and it was not till she left Castle-Howel she fancied herself safe.

The next morning the Castle Howel family, set out for the metropolis.—The news papers had announced the marriage of “the right honorable the Earl of Castle Howel, “to the beautiful Miss Ellen Meredith,” and the curiosity of the beau mode was in consequence excited; their arrival at Bath, where Ellen wished to see her governess, and old school fellows; was proclaimed by the usual music, ringing of bells, &c. and Mrs. Forrest and her ladies, were very early in their respects.

At the sight of Mrs. Forrest, Winifred Griffith, whose head had been in a constant vortex of new cloaths, fine sights, and
dignity

dignity of station, so infinitely superior to any thing she had ever seen, or expected; remembered there was such a man in existence, as Joseph Wilks, whose kind letter, (which brought her into such disgrace at Code Gwyn,) yet remained unanswered, and that in the aforesaid letter, certain things were alledged as coming from Mrs. Forrest, at which she had taken great offence; she also remembered, that during Miss Meredith's residence at Bath, she was forbid to attend on her;—but times were changed, she had now the honor to be first woman to a Countess, one, who from the superior gifts of fortune and nature, seemed formed for the adoration of the multitude; and although poor Win had the ill luck, to be disliked by every soul in the family, but her Lady, on account of her uncouth language and manners which appeared vulgar, and her promptitude to speak whatever she thought, on all occasions, which appeared bold and assuming, yet, the Countess's protection gave her the highest degree of consequence, and Mrs.

Forrest's name was carried to her, as she sat lolling at the window, and sipping her coffee.

The aforesaid recollection, tempted Winifred to give herself a few airs ; but the respect she knew the Countess had for her late governess luckily restrained her ; she was however resolved to exhibit her consequence, and at the same time gratify both her vanity and passion, (if what Joseph Wilks had inspired her with, might be so called) by learning some particulars of him.

Mrs. Forrest was therefore shewn to her apartment—and with the affability always attendant on good sense, and good breeding, was much pleased to see such a desirable change, in the circumstances of one, whom she had considered as a domestic of her own ; she congratulated her, with such unaffected good nature, that all Winifred's projected *bauteux* was in an instant forgotten.

When

When Mrs. Forrest enquired of the Countess; Winifred, who really was a thorough good hearted creature; and proud, as well as fond of her lady, launched out into descriptions of her state, and grandeur, ostentatiously displayed all the paraphernalia then unpacked, and concluded by saying (what to her was really a wonder) that she was not the least altered, but better tempered than ever.

Mrs. Forrest smiling, said, she was much mistaken, if any change of circumstances would alter so sweet a disposition, her elevation did not surprise *her*, she was sure, Lady Castle Howel need only be seen, to be universally admired; for her part, she had always expected Lord-Claverton would have been the man, and believed he was sincerely mortified, he had not made his proposals before Lord Castle Howel—the Countess, to be sure, could be no more than happy—but Lord Claverton, was such an elegant, polite bred man, and *younger* than Lord Castle Howel.—

Winifred

Winifred interrupted her, to ask, when she had seen Mr. Joseph ?

“ If you mean Lord Claverton’s valet, he brought me a card yesterday.”

Winifred coloured up to the ears, pleased to think she should so soon exhibit her state to Joseph, but her joy was of short duration : Mrs. Forrest informed her, Lord Claverton had been very much indisposed, that he had often done her the honor to call at her house, *before* his indisposition, and that his servant had brought her an apology, for his not making his bow, before he left Bath.

“ Dear me ! dear me ! how sorry,” Winifred *said* she was for poor Lord Claverton, and how sorry, she *really* was, that Joseph had gone *without* her seeing him, or at least without *his* seeing *her* ; but there was some comfort he was at London, where she also was going, and no doubt, her true lover would soon find her.

The

The moment Mrs. Forrest was announced, she was admitted, the Earl politely thanked her, for her care of his lady.

Ellen loved, and respected her governesses, as every young lady will, who has the good fortune to be educated by accomplished women, whose own faultless example, illustrate their precepts; and she received her with open arms breakfast was served in the Countess's apartment, but the Earl at her request joined his aunts and sister.

After exhausting chit chat enquires, Lady Castle Howel recollected Lord Claverton had been at Bath, and asked if he yet continued there; Mrs. Forrest had too proper a sense of the rule of right, to say a syllable more of him, than merely to answer the Countess's questions, which were, simply, when he came, and when he left Bath.

Mrs. Forrest's nice sense of virtue, and propriety was blended with an excess of good nature—Lord Claverton, in prosecution of his

darling scheme, had returned to Bath ;—An adept in every art of penetration, he found her weak side, if indeed it might be so called, and contrived to be so *unhappy*, so *inadvertent*, and so off, all kind of guard, when he found Ellen was removed, it was impossible for her to avoid the discovery he *intended* she should make, of his being *desperately in love* ; and as he had so much honor on his tongue, and she so much in her heart, it was also impossible she could doubt, either the sincerity, or honor, of his professions ; proud of the confidence of a nobleman of his rank, and pleased to look forward to the elevation of a young creature she loved, and whom by contributing to bring about a match of such consequence, she should serve and oblige—she became familiarized to the event, and spoke, without reserve, of Ellen to his Lordship, as he did of his passion to her.—

The sudden recall from school, was a matter of mutual surprise and conjecture ; every possible cause, except the right, was canvassed,

canvassed, and Joseph desired to write to his true love for information; how *she* was engaged, the reader has seen, and as Mrs. Forrest thought his Lordship's health was affected, by the unaccountable mystery, that had attended Ellen's removal, she easily persuaded herself, he was an amiable unfortunate lover.——

Lord Castle Howel being in comparison of his Lady, and even of Lord Claverton, an old man; the match so suddenly concluded, the inadvertent enquiries from Lady Castle Howel, after a lover, so superior to her husband, in Mrs. Forrest's opinion, were corroborating that the attachment was, tho' unpropitious, *mutual*,—she took leave of her late pupil with sentiments of compassion, too strong to be confined to her own bosom; these she confided to a female friend, who had a friend, who had two friends, whose friends were dispersed, over the whole polite circles, then at Bath, the natural consequences of which were, that when
the

the Earl and his bride, with the ladies of their party, went to the rooms, in the evening—the mereft Chit there, knew that Lady Caſtle Howel was a beautiful young girl, *forced* to marry an *old man*, when ſhe was breaking her heart for a *younger one*. It is true, her Ladyſhip's look and manner, poſſitively contradicted this, as never did peace and content, more viſibly eradiare a human countenance,—but rumour's hundred tongues eſtabliſhed the fact.

Thus in the full bloom of health, with a temper ſweet and lively, a diſpoſition to pleaſe, and be pleaſed, attached to her huſband, by whom ſhe was adored, fond of gaiety and ſplendour, of which ſhe was in full poſſeſſion; the ſenſible world choſe ſhe ſhould be the moſt wretched creature living; the men ſwore, “it was pitiful, wond’rous pitiful,” ſhe was a charming creature—and Claverton would have her in the end.—The women ſaw nothing in her, but a baby face, which would ſoon be ſpoild, by the quantity
of

of paint she wore, and all the little world, then at Bath, was so good, as to be extremely agitated, about the fate of a young creature, who herself felt, and really was, one of the happiest women in existence; who laughed, danced and chatted away the hours, while Lady Gertrude, and Lady Frances, accompanied by their niece, were visiting beauties of the last century; and retracing men, and things, *now no more.*

C H A P. II.

THE week thus spent at Bath, was in fact, an entrée into the greater world, of London, for as every body visited the Castle Howels, and as these *every bodies* had *their* correspondents, to whom they sent their opinion and description, together with a full, and particular account of all the reports, true,

true, and untrue, in circulation respecting this phenomena, in the world of beauty ; and as besides, which the world is in possession of so many daily blessings, ycleped newspapers ; before she reached the metropolis, Lady Castle Howel was better known to the haut ton, and every Coffee house, than to her most intimate friends.—

Meanwhile, Lord Claverton was confined to his house, a prey to ill health, ill humour, and unsuccessful passion. Joseph Wilks was still prime minister ; not that Lord Claverton had an atom of regard for Joseph, or Joseph for his Lord ; but as the one was not more apt in planning, than the other dexterous in executing, and as habit becomes second nature, there was a kind of compact, between master and man, which promised to be more lasting, than such compacts generally are.—

Joseph, who was raised from a private in the guards, to his present honorable station ; tho' very

very illiterate, had a great share of what is called mother's wit : he was taught his letters at a charity school, which he learnt to put together on the drum head ; as he was a great man's great man, before he could write, application supplied the place of instruction, and he was self learnt to scrawl such letters as we have seen in the course of this history ; he was a dashing fellow, and in no small degree a newspaper critic,—as the papers went through his hands, before they reached his Lord, he had it in his power to give the first information of every paragraph, that would amuse, or entertain him.

The moment his lordship's bell rung, Joseph appeared with the papers, and almost out of breath read the Bath news,—

“ It is said a beautiful new made Countess
“ sighs in the arms of her old Lord, for the
“ object of her first attachment, and it is
“ whispered that Lord C——n left Bath, in
“ delicate regard to the feelings of the new
“ married pair.”

The

The spear of Ithuriel, when it detected Satan at the ear of Eve, had not a more instantaneous effect on the father of intrigue, than the paragraph had upon this his true son; and a letter from his friend Mrs. Elderton completed the business:

From the time Ellen was sent to Bath, he marked her for the sweet companion of those hours, his constitution would no longer permit him to devote to intemperance; his whole heart fixed on a design, in which he knew not of a competitor, he thought he had nothing to do but to watch the fine fruit, till an opportunity offered to gather it for his own table. The more secure he had been, the more vexatious his disappointment; but the Bath news renovated his hopes; as to Ellen's loving Lord Castle Howel, that was out of the question, and a thoughtless young woman, married to a man, she did *not* love, was a fair field for intrigue; whether partial to him, or not, no matter,—the world was taught to believe so, the scandalous chronicle had established the fact, and volumes wrote

wrote on the subject could not do it away.—Self love indeed, was mortified in the consciousness, that the reports, as far as concerned him, were false, but that was by no means an argument, why they should always continue so.—Dr. Macsheat, still his medical attendant, and always his tool, retained his influence in Grosvenor-Street—and he himself, resolved to become a favourite of Lady Margaret's, which he well knew, thro' his friend the doctor, would be a very easy matter, and he instructed Joseph, to be more in love than ever, with Winifred, or whatever damsel might happen to attend Lady Castle Howel.

Meanwhile the unconscious Countess, was in raptures at every thing she saw; the towns, so superior to any thing she had passed thro' in Wales, the elegant accommodations on the road, the respect paid to their retinue, the grand and populous avenues to the metropolis, were all objects of wonder and of pleasure.

Lord

Lord Castle Howel's house appeared nothing extraordinary, perhaps, to those who had seen some of the superb edifices, which adorn the court end of the town ; but it was spacious, convenient, and nobly furnished : Seddon never credited his taste more, than in the new decorations of the bride's apartments,—her dressing room, library, closet, and even powdering room, were more useful than showy, and yet more tasty than either : she looked delight, and gratitude, at her husband, when he gave her possession of them, and the next day, from habit of employing herself, was found very busy with Winifred, at the hour the knocker was in perpetual motion ; but this was an error she was not likely to retain ;—simplicity of dress, reading, music and work were soon obliged to give place to more fashionable avocations ;—the house was thronged with visitors of all descriptions, she saw a vast number of pretty women, and agreeable men, who appeared as desirous to cultivate her friendship, as if their very beings had depended on her.—

When

When the ladies declared it was impossible to exist without dear Lady Castle Howel, and the men swore, life was no life, where she *was not*, could she be less than pleased? When women of the first fashion, were so anxious to fill up every moment of *their* time, encroaching, even on the hours allowed for meals, and rest, in dressing, public amusements, and gaming, the three grand pursuits of the superior women of the age; how was it possible *she* could be so stupid, as to prefer any of the obsolete amusements, which had filled a long summer's day, and winter's evening, in the mountains of Wales? had she been fortunate enough to have one *friend*, one adviser, not warped by affection, not partial in indulgence, she might perhaps have selected from the multitude, who crowded her parties, a circle, in whose society she might have escaped, the almost inevitable evils, which however well the polite world may please to be with themselves, are monsters of their own growth. But Ellen had no friends; she had only a

VOL. II. D tender

tender husband, affectionate relations, a profligate lover, and a numerous acquaintance.

The points of the compass could not differ more than the three ladies, who undertook to chaprone Ellen into life.

Lady Gertrude, and Lady Frances Howel, were toasts forty years before Ellen was in being ; they were born within an hour of each other, and tho' in the early part of their lives, when pleased with *themselves*, they were ready to dispense to others the smile that glowed from the heart, to the coral lip of beauty ; they were never even *then* remarkable for their sisterly attachment ; one sentiment only seemed to be mutual, and this one was the subject of their first animosity. Their cousin, a wild handsome young fellow of that age, famous for his infidelities among women, and his courage among men, laid a bet with some of his dissipated companions, that he would make love to his two cousins, one a starched prude, the other a
wild

wild coquette, and be successful with both ; he won his wager ; and what aggravated the injury done two young ladies of character, he was, at the same time, actually married to his mother's dairy-maid.

His mock addressers however were not so guarded, but the twin sisters were jealous of each other ; and indeed, nothing, but their mutual suspicions could have blinded them to the perfidy of their lover.—

The resentment of the then Lord Castle-Howel, and his family, were justly levelled against Mr. Howel, but the *laugh* of the country was against the ladies, and so strong they persuaded their father to leave Wales, and live wholly in London, which he did for the remainder of his life ; but whether the story travelled with them, whether they were not *quite* so charming as they now described themselves to have been when young, or whether *experience* of the falsehood of *man*, steel-ed their hearts against their fascination, they

were now in the sixty-fifth year of their celibacy ; retaining, if not their virgin beauties, all the propensities that had formerly distinguished them ; perpetually jarring, contradicting, and reproaching each other, and agreeing in nothing, but their wish to disinherit their cousin, they had spent their long unsocial lives without love, and incapable of friendship.

Lady Gertrude (the prude) took on her to select a set of acquaintance for the young Countess, who might have sat for Hogarth's pictures, in the society of old maids ; consisting of widows, whose last hopes were buried with their husbands,—wives, whose faces and manners had effectually secured *them* from temptation, but whose tempers had suffered the severest trials, from the folly of their handsome acquaintance ; antiquated virgins, a few fretful old men, whose wit was out of fashion, and a few *as* fretful who wished to bring *theirs* in.—

“ These

"These now, my dear," said she, "are people whose countenance will protect you from the nauseous adulation, men of this age pay to weak young women; you will meet none of the bucks, as they are called; none of the idle red and blue coats, that annoy people of superior ideas almost every where; no, what men you see there are sensible, rational beings, from whom you may acquire improvment, and receive instruction; keep to such characters, and your own will remain unimpeached."

"I dare say," replied Ellen, colouring extremely, "the ladies and gentlemen you mention, are very amiable; but I shall never think of having any other protector for *my* character, than my own innocence, and my Lord's honor."

"When you have been a certain time initiated into the society I have mentioned, you will think differently,—it is necessary in the great world, not only to *be* innocent, but to *seem* so."-----

“ *Be* and *seem* ! indeed madam, I shall think any time very ill bestowed, that is devoted to the distinction---to me, it is exactly one thing.”

“ Well, Lady Autumn and her sister, Miss Pendegrass (both of whom I remember very handsome) and *are* very clever, have left their cards, and I will introduce you to their assembly ; you will be charmed with the decorum and solidity of their conversation, and I have too good an opinion of your understanding, to suppose you will not prefer *them*, to any other acquaintance you can make.”

Ellen acquiesced with Lady Gertrude's sentiments, who left her fully satisfied, she would follow her advice.

“ My sister has engaged you to a mighty stupid party, niece,” said Lady Frances, with a youthful affectation of levity, “ you will be bored to death ; I never could bear the assemblies of that Lady Autumn, tho' I suppose they are not now quite so insufferable,

as when poor Autumn was living; what a life did she lead that poor man one evening, merely for kissing my glove."

"Kissing your glove madam!"

"Gallantry child, mere gallantry; then the first hour after we were seated, while she made tea (ladies made their own tea then) I was very young, but I remember it extremely well, there were wehipped to death with her lamentable jealousy,—and as to Bab Pendegrass, if you happen to shew your white teeth before her, you are undone (Lady Frances's teeth were in tolerable preservation, which having displayed, she went on) first because her own (when she had any) were, I remember, (and I was quite an urchin) *black* as jet; and secondly, because Sir Solomon Spindle, who has been her dangler, off and on, these forty years, will be sure you mean it to him, and ogle you accordingly.

Lady Frances wore that day, a new clear muslin robe, trimmed with Pink, and monsieur (who was very famous for assisting nature) had so managed the dressing of her hair, that both in warmth and size, it supplied the want of a cap, and she was at this moment contemplating her figure before the glass, which *still*, in opposition to her sister, who was rather corpulent, retained a youthful slim appearance,—“take my advice, and I’ll introduce you into the pleasantest set of beings on earth : First, there’s Lady Daub, a woman of exquisite feelings, tho’ she has been obliged to disguise them a little on account of her Enamel—*there* I remember, I first saw the haughty, gallant, gay Lothario.”

“Lothario, Madam, pray who is that?”

“Why my dear that is Lord Merriot, that was—the dear duke of—that is—a nobleman, who has been in the practice of making love, long before I was born, and has still some new thing to do, and to say, to every
fine

fine woman he meets; if I had not made a vow never to marry."——

Ellen could keep her countenance no longer; the Earl had in their airing thro' Hyde Park, been stopped by this dear Duke, who certainly did say a vast number of *new*, surprising things in praise of *her* beauty, but who nevertheless had so provoked her risible faculties, she could not help offending against the laws of politeness, by bursting into a fit of laughter, which offence, to the astonishment of Lady Frances, she *now* repeated.

Now, be it known unto all pert, handsome, gigling young women, the most dangerous thing they can do, and the hardest to be forgiven, is to laugh at an old coquette, at a time when she is new dressed, before a glass, and well with herself.

Lady Frances's little grey eyes struck fire, she cast a contemptuous glance at our laughter, and left the room.——

Her look, and manner, frightened Ellen out of her mirth, and much disconcerted, she repeated to Lady Margaret the whole conversation.—

“ My aunts,” said Lady Margaret, “ have been so long immured, at their Castle in the north, they forget how times and fashions alter,—the people they talk of, are like themselves *out of date*—but if you do not accompany them in their visits, it will be a heinous offence, and you will meet many of the first people at Lady Daub’s. When once you have been presented, and the ancient Ladies gone, you wo’n’t mind company; your old friend Lord Claverton and Dr. Macsnean (who both dine with us to-day) when my Lord chuses to stay in his study, will make up our whist table, and attend us to the Opera; we may receive, and pay a few visits, but I wish this racketting life was over, I am weary of it, an hour with one agreeable friend is worth all the public places in town.”

The reader will perceive the change, *one* friend has made in Lady Margaret.

Her plan was worse than the old ladies, "shut up at whist with Doctor Macsheat, Lord Claverton, and Lady Margaret, monstrous!" Nothing was ever so pleasant to Ellen, as the racketting life Lady Margaret had very lately began to hate, and she secretly dissented from the whist proposition; the entire confidence she placed in her Lord, made her long to tell him the conversation of the morning, but it was time to dress for dinner.—

This article of dressing was the only thing, she disliked in her new arrangements, her dishabille was elegant, and she was always, even at Code Gwyn, clean, why therefore her hair was to be deranged, after it was once put in order,—why one elegant dress, was to be changed for another, merely because it was dinner hour, she could not understand, and was provoked at such a waste of time, but

this error was also one that required a very short time to correct.—

The Earl led the Countess into the drawing room, a little while before dinner was announced, and presented the gentlemen both to her and his aunts.

Lord Claverton trembled ; Doctor Macshean, who had not seen her, since they left her, the first time at Bath, could not help breaking out in a rapturous exclamation, when he saw the beautiful Romp of less than sixteen, now changed into a tall graceful woman, whose elegant figure, and fine proportioned limbs, seemed put together in the most perfect symetry, to set off a face as faultless, as at that instant, was her gentle heart ; she had already acquired a taste and manner in dress, which more adorns a beautiful woman, than the most costly Jewels, and she derived from her excellent understanding, a confidence in herself that supported her rank.—The blush of modesty suffused her cheek, at first sight
of

of any stranger, but the world will allow, a young lady entering into high life in London, is in a very fair way of getting over all faults of that kind.—

Doctor Macsnean, still adhered to a cautious humility of manners before the Earl, and nothing could be more respectfully attentive, to the Countess than Lord Claverton, he also contrived without any appearance of adulation, to make his politeness acceptable to the two spinsters, who both declared, he was the best bred man they had seen since they left the north; another instance of Lord Claverton's knowledge of the human heart, since he reconciled two such contradictions in his favour.

Parties were proposed, and engagements made for the opera, plays and masquerades, all which places Ellen longed to be at.

Lady Gertrude appealed to Lord Claverton, whether it was proper the bride should
be

be seen about, before she was presented.

Lord Claverton did not exactly know the sentiments of the rest of the family, and could not answer more positively than, "certainly, except indeed in certain cases."

"Certain cases," said Lady Frances, impatiently, "our cousin the Duchess is not in town, as she is the person of highest rank in the family, it is proper my niece should be presented by her, but sure there is no necessity for us to keep house till she arrives."

Lady Margaret saw no reason to hurry.

The Earl wished Ellen's opinion.

"Oh, don't ask me, for tho' I don't know what is right, I shall certainly give my vote for the opera and plays."

Lady Gertrude frowned, but as a favourite finger was announced for that night, with such

such champions to support her, Lady Castle Howel ventured to make her party, from which her ladyship did not however chuse to be excluded.

Lord Claverton had the honor to hand the bride; the Earl took care of his aunts, and Doctor Macsheat had the felicity to press the fair hand of Lady Margaret.

Out came the glasses---neither sex, are in this polished age, so vulgar as to see with the naked eye.

The men having examined every feature, with but one opinion of her beauty, formed many of her appearance, and attendants; that Lord Claverton was a happy dog, and that Lord Castle Howel was an old fool, were settled points.

“What an old stupid fellow! to let his wife’s lover be on such familiar terms in his family,” cried an emaciated young nobleman, whose
lady

lady had recently eloped with her footman :
“very good,” answered Sir Harry Whiffle,
“how would you have him avoid it, if the
Lady is resolved?”

“In that case to be sure,” joined a red faced
Counsellor, “he has no resource but West-
minster-hall.”

“Oh, damn it !” said General Spindle, “he
deserves it for marrying—what can a man ex-
pect, who parts with his liberty ? I dare say
he might have been had on easier terms.”

General Spindle, was one of these generous
creatures, who always kept one pretty
woman, or another, in great style, pro bono
publico, he was duped, bullied, and laugh-
ed at, by half the celebrated courtezans of the
age, but what of that, he had not parted
with his *liberty* !

The Ladies were divided in their opinion
of her beauty, some thought her too tall,
others.

others not tall enough ; with some she was too much in the *em bon point*, with others too thin ; one thought her handsome, but lamented she wanted animation, others thought she affected intelligence of countenance, but was not at all pretty ; they all however agreed, she was very bold, to make her first *entree* into public with a favored lover—they were sure she was very imprudent, but would invite her to their parties nevertheless.——

Ellen, in the mean while, fancied herself in a land of enchantment, and her unfashionable attention to the music disgraced her still more than her imprudence ; the first opera was the most delightful thing in nature, except the second, the third was still more charming ; and so, having been presented, under a load of family jewels ; the Queen having admired, and the King saluted her—there was no longer an objection to her seeing every place, and every thing ; and to do her justice, no young Lady
of

of fashion ever made a more liberal use of the bon ton parole ; her morning levees were crowded with fashionable milliners, and mantua-makers, all of whom had some exquisite thing, just imported, or invented, which no Lady but herself was to see, to whose civility she was too much obliged, not to give an order ; every half hour teemed with petitions from distressed families, or verses from indigent poets ; every day produced a fresh list of engagements, and every visit an addition to her acquaintance.

Lady Gertrude reminded her, of Lady Autumn's assembly, where she found the company very fine, very solemn, and very stupid, till cards a little inspired them ; she cut into a whist party, a very sentimental grave old gentleman, chatted to, and challenged her to bet, in so civil a manner, she could not refuse ; in two hours she had lost one hundred and fifty guineas—and then declined playing, having, as she frankly confessed, lost all her money.

The

The sentimental Gentleman begged she would do him the honor to make him her banker.

Ellen was too ignorant to understand his meaning, he explained, "what sir, and so run in debt," said she, with vivacity, "Oh, no."

The Ladies with great difficulty concealed their contempt, the poor thing was so very silly.

Ellen now looked for Lady Gertrude, who she found at the same table with her friend Lady Autumn, and most unconscionably was she fleeced by her very old acquaintance.

"I have lost all my money, Madam," said Ellen, shewing her empty purse, and laughing.—

Lady Gertrude sat reddening over her cards, without regarding her.

The

The other table was immediately full, all parties were as intent on their cards, as if their existence was at stake.

I wonder, thought Ellen, looking round, when the conversazzioni begins.

Just then Lady Gertrude directed her servant to be called, in a voice in which there was neither sentiment, or good humour, and she was hastily quitting her dear friend Lady Autumn, without one trait of antient friendship on her countenance.

Ellen joined her, "dear Madam you would not leave *me*."

"Oh, I forgot, I beg pardon," and she stalked as fast as possible to her carriage, and the instant it moved from the door, began a regular, and succinct account of the games she had played, the cards she had held, and the bets she had made; in all which she had not made a single mistake,
or

or. deviated in one instance from the rules laid down by Hoyle ; that therefore Lady Autumn and Miss Pendergraft must have cheated.

Ellen was astonished ; cheat ! Lady Autumn, cheat !

Oh ! Lady Gertrude observed, *that* was no such an unprecedented thing, Lady Autumn was always famous for it.

Heavens ! thought Ellen, what an acquaintance to preserve ones character.

It was near two when they got home, and the first evening Ellen had spent from the protecting side of her fond Lord ; he welcomed her with the sincerest affection, and heard of her loss at play with no more apparent regret than she herself told it,—he immediately replenished her purse, and in the greatest good humour, listened to her account of the manner in which she had passed the evening.

I have

I have before said, Ellen's natural disposition was lively, it was perhaps so to excess. In the enjoyment of every indulgence, that can render a gay, dissipated life delightful; the object of admiration wherever she appeared; never addressed at home, but in the soothing voice of affection, or abroad, but in the insinuating one of flattery; *followed, imitated,* and courted by all the gay world; in high health, and in the full glow of conscious beauty; is it to be wondered, that spirit, that natural vivacity, which rendered her life at Code Gwyn, one continued scene of sportive amusement, should, *so* situated in London, sometimes *exceed* the exact limits of *discretion*?

She was an excellent *mimic*, the Earl had often been amused, when between themselves, she would imitate his aunts, in their peculiarities and disputes; forgetting now, that although Lady Autumn had, as Lady Gertrude said, "cheated a little," she was that Lady's most esteemed friend; that Miss Pendergraft

dergraft was her constant correspondent, and had been in former times her *confidante*; or that the whole of the company who were invited on purpose to meeting Lady Gertrude, were her particular intimates: she sat down, and with great cleverness, as well as good humour, gave so striking a specimen of the *persons, manners and conversation*, at Lady Autumn's assembly, that Lady Frances, who had declined going, and Lady Margaret, who had taken that pretence for staying at home, and the Earl, who all knew the people she described, burst into convulsive fits of laughter; even Lady Gertrude relaxed her solemn features into a smile.

"Be merry and wise," says the old proverb, but shew me a witty creature under eighteen, who ever was wise when merry encouraged by the success of her imitations, on she went, and though last, not least, concluded with *Lady Gertrude* herself, whose inward vexation, before she left the card table,

table, and invectives against her friend's chicane, afterwards were indeed *fair* subjects, tho' not *wise* ones.

Lady Gertrude arose with indignation, "really Madam," said the enraged maiden, you have been taken out of your sphere, you should have been an actress."—

Lord Castle Howel reddened, but Ellen's good humour was invincible.

"And I should have liked it vastly," replied she, standing up and composing her features; let me see, what was it my Lord first taught me, "She never told her love, but let concealment like a worm 'ith bud, feed on her damask cheek;" and then I forget what followed, something about green and yellow melancholy, but the best was at last, "she smiled at grief," now that's what I shall always do."

A jaundiced imagination, sees its own colour in every thing, Lady Gertrude felt
that

that Ellen's irony was just, and well applied, tho' her countenance wanted not circumference, it had yet a good deal of both green, and yellow in it, which all the washes (and they were not a few,) she had employed herself and her woman, many years in making, could not remove; and she doubted not but Shakespeare himself was now introduced to insult *her*:—without giving the salutations of the night, therefore, she took a taper off a side table, and stalked to her apartment, leaving her sister and niece laughing, both at *her* and her *friends*.

As soon as she was out of sight, the incorrigible Ellen took her taper, and having lighted it, with the same indignant look, finished her imitations, by stalking to her dressing room, exactly in Lady Gertrude's manner, the Ladies again burst into fits of laughter, but in separating, Lady Frances observed, “all this was very impertinent.”

CHAP. III.

LORD Castle Howel had amused himself several mornings, with purchasing a number of elegant books, to furnish Ellen's library, and requested she would look at them; her answer was as simple as true, "she would be very glad to do it, but really she had.—Not time,"

"Not time?"——

"No, indeed! I have not,"—and a loud rap at the door, confirmed in part the assertion; it was a Lady of high rank, come to drop a card, previous to an invitation to her ball, and the instant after the Duchess of — called and was admitted; this Lady's visit was, it is true, short, but as the Countess was *at home*, it was followed by a succession of idlers, who occupied the whole of the day, till it was time to dress for dinner—
and

and in the evening, at the request of Lady Frances, she accompanied her to Lady Daub's.—

Here were crowded rooms, and a numerous assembly of people of high distinction; Lady Daub herself was a dowager of quality, whose face had been literally *masked* the last twenty years of her life; on that mask, the roses and lilies were in perpetual bloom; she had confined in a corner of her mansion, several fine women, whom she had brought into the world, but who, in no other sense, had reason to call her *mother*; they were *too* full grown, *too* handsome, and *too* amiable to be shewn to the world; and she *too* sensible of the injury she did them, to bear their company when alone:—alone! did I say, that was a situation in which Lady Daub never found herself, but when her mask wanted repair.

At the assembly of such a woman, some old fashioned readers may suppose, few of

the well informed cultivated beings, who *credit* the list of fashion, would be found; but such is the prevalence of custom, such the rage for dissipation, and such the necessity of *killing time*, that many of the most amiable of that description, were mixed in the transient crowd that entered and retired.

Lady Castle Howel, and Lady Frances, were among the *select party* invited to supper; the gay Lothario, was also one of the chosen, as was the all accomplished Lord Charles Dash, his son, and Lord Claverton.

Lord Castle Howel's inveterate head ache, prevented his being ever in those late parties;—there was dancing in one of the lower rooms; a pharo table in another, and the rest filled with card parties.

The Countess cut in, but her ears were attracted by the sound of the music, and she, as usual, lost every thing she staked; Lord Claverton stood behind her chair.—“I have lost all my money,” said Ellen, “somebody
will

will have the goodness to take my place."—
Lord Charles Dash begged he might try
her luck for her.

"No, pray don't, I always lose."

Lord Charles took her place.

"Oh, Lord Claverton, I am glad to see *you*,
—will you join the dancers?"

Lord Claverton, with an air of transport,
led her down stairs, and they were dancing
with great spirit, when Lord Charles, and
Lady Frances joined them, with a fullpurse;
"you have been fortunate, Lady Castle
Howel," said Lord Charles, "here are your
winnings."

Ellen drew back, Lady Frances explained,
that Lord Charles having merely taken *her*
cards, if he had lost, it would have been
a debt of honor due from her; she accepted
the purse and continued dancing.—

The reader may believe, Lord Claverton lost no opportunity of paying his court to his fair partner,—he did indeed play off all the artillery of sighs, looks, short absences, and sudden recoveries, &c. &c. but he might as well have been at the pharo table, dancing was an exercise Ellen both excelled and delighted in; and as it was the first amusement of the kind she had been at, since her arrival in town, enjoyed it *too* much to attend to the soft nothings of a man so perfectly indifferent to her: when the last dance was gone down, there was a short interval before supper; they sauntered to the pharo table, and in ten minutes Ellen won the bank; this was the first moment she felt an inclination to game, it was impossible not to be pleased at winning two thousand guineas, in so short a time; Lord Charles, and Lord Claverton, congratulated her on her success,—supper was announced before she had time to lose back any of her winnings, and there was no play afterwards.—

At

At four o'clock she found the Earl waiting in her dressing room.—

“You have been well entertained, my love,” said he, shewing his watch,

“Yes, I have been dancing, and am quite tired.”

“Dancing! have you, and pray who had the honor to be your partner?”

“The honor was Lord Claverton's, but I believe he was heartily tired of it, for you know he is a poor creature, and I would not let him sit down. Oh! but I have been at cards too; see, my dear Lord, how rich I am,”—taking out the loaded purse, a quantity of guineas fell on the carpet which she ordered Winifred to pick up, without troubling herself to count the number; her pocket book was next displayed full of notes—this was the first painful sensation the good Earl had felt since his marriage; while she continued

losing small sums, without caring about them, he knew the rage of gaming would not hurt her; but such a flow of success would have the double *ill* effect, of rendering her anxious to obtain it in future, and lessening her estimation of the sums she had hitherto reckoned capital—he was lost in a disagreeable reverie, when Ellen complained of fatigue, and they retired to rest.

“Well,” said Lady Frances, when they met at four the next afternoon, for Ellen’s head had ached, and she was too much fatigued to rise before, “and how did you like Lady Daub?”

Ellen declared she frightened her.

“Frightened you! she is one of the politest women of the age.”

“Oh! I don’t mean her manners, it was that shocking unnatural red and white.”

Lady

Lady Gertrude, who had not been cordially reconciled to the Countess, since Lady Autumn's night, smiled contemptuously, "yes, Lady Daub's red and white, has a fortitude *time* has no power over."

"Is she a very grave person, Madam?" said Ellen.

"Far from it" replied Lady Frances, "she is just of my disposition."

"And of your age, too?"

"I am not so old as Lady Daub, she was a woman when I wore white frocks."

"Well! I should not have thought that; but does she never smile?"

"No, I defy her to do that," said Lady Gertrude.

"Make as free with your *own* friends as you please sister," interrupted Lady Frances.

“You should give that hint to Lady Castle Howel, sister,” answered Lady Gertrude, spitefully.

“I give it to you, Ma’am—but don’t you think the Duke delightful niece? and his son, Lord Charles?”

“He plays his *cards* well, I dare say; he won my money back even in less time than I lost it.”

The Earl, on whom the event of the last night had made an unpleasant impression, now joined, “but on the whole, Ellen, how did you like your entertainment?”

“Charming! delightful! there were many very sweet women, and some agreeable men, and I made several very pleasant new acquaintances.”

Lord Claverton was announced, he received the thanks of the man, whose peace
he

he was meditating to ruin, for his politeness to the Ladies of his family, and came to offer them tickets for the professional concert.

“ A concert ! Oh ! pray let us go,” cried Ellen, “ I have not been at a concert yet.” The Earl tenderly anxious for her health, reminded her of her head-ache, and the fatigues of the last night.—

One *was gone* and she had quite recovered the other.—

“ You complained of want of time my Ellen, had you not better devote this one evening to your library ?”

“ Oh, reading, she was sure would give her the head-ache.” Lord Castle Howel sighed at the remembrance of the happy days past in the library at Castle Howel, but could not prevail on himself to oppose, any farther, the wish of a wife he doated

on, and therefore agreed to accompany her.—

When once the mind of a young woman, has taken a bias for pleasure, unrestrained by a fear of consequence—or a prudential regard to expence, it is in vain to expect she will be either sated, or even gratified; amusing, good humoured, gay, witty, and pleasant, Lady Castle Howel's company would have been courted without the personal charms, which were sure to attract a crowd of fashionable men, wherever she appeared; a round of engagements employed every hour of her time, and a constant routine of amusements, every avocation of her mind.—

Joseph's attendance on Winifred was continued, but with little advantage to his employer, for the Countess had no *time* to talk to *her*, or to hear, as formerly, the *wonderfuls* she had to say—but his Lordship's close attendance was talked of every where, and by every body but those most concerned.—

At

At length the happy intimation was given, that the Countess was pregnant, the Earl's fondness could not increase, but his anxiety for the welfare of Ellen did,—he remonstrated anxiously, and tenderly, against fatigue and late hours, and was joined by the two old spinisters, who entreated her to retire into the Country. But the country had *now* no charms for Ellen.

She had a list of engagements that would last till the hour of her accouchment, besides her own nights, which were always brilliantly attended; but she constantly promised to return home at an early hour, and *as constantly* broke her word; she had made a set of intimates of women, who were at the head of every thing, the business of whose lives seemed to be, that of getting rid of their husband's estates, but they were women of *character !!!*

She played high, and her losses were so frequent, that the Earl, with great delicacy, informed

informed her he was unable to answer such frequent demands.

Thunder struck and amazed, she turned pale, she had judged of the riches of her husband, by his liberality, and supposed one as inexhaustible as the other.—

Lady Gertrude entered,—she found her near fainting, and terrified lest her disorder should bring on an event that would frustrate all their hopes, drew from her the cause, and immediately supplied her with money to discharge every debt of honor, with advice to her not to play again.

Ellen had selected one among her acquaintance, to whom she was in the habit of speaking of all her affairs, *secrets* she had *none*; the honorable Mrs. Morley, Lord Durant's eldest daughter, married to a rich banker, with whom she was, on account of her expences, at perpetual variance; Ellen told that Lady what had happened, ingenuously regretted her

her extravagance, and resolved to leave off play. Mrs. Morley burst into a fit of laughter.—Ellen could not divine the cause; her friend assured her, the Earl was *bumming* her; —he does not like you should spend so much money, and he knows the simple goodness of your heart so well, he takes this method of interesting your feelings in his own cause; he *must* be rich, *be* or his musty old sister, never lived at any expence; but come, we shall be late, Mrs. Hewart's doors are open early; I teased Morley out of five hundred to day, and am resolved to be a bold adventurer to night, “allons.”

Mrs. Morley *was* bold and successful, Ellen caught the infection, instead of paying her debts of honor, she lost all the money Lady Gertrude had given her; Lord Charles Dash, one of her creditors, walked up, he condoled with her on her repeated ill fortune; but “heaven is just,” continued he, “those charms alone are more than should fall to the lot of one happy mortal,” and he seized her

her hand, from which she had just drawn her glove, and with a freedom, he had never before attempted, imprinted on it a kiss.

Overwhelmed with shame, regret and mortification, she wanted, for the moment, power to assert her own dignity.

Encouraged by her passiveness, and invited by the embarrassment he knew she was in (for Mrs. Morley had, in mere kindness, told him how the Earl had treated her *friend*,) he fixed his eyes on hers, and drawing his chair near her, whispered an inundation of nonsense, every period ending in the word *love*.

Poor Ellen felt, in that instant, every sensation of anguish, the human mind *could feel* in such a situation; pride, shame and virtue, struggled in her bosom,—her cheek glowed, but when she looked on the face of the unfeeling insulter, and recollected she
was

was in his debt, without means to enfranchise her honor, *shame* was predominant.

Lord Claverton, *constant* to the settled point of all his desires; was an anxious and interested observer of this scene; he well knew Lord Castle Howel's fortune would not support his wife's extravagance; he saw with pleasure she was sinking deeper and deeper into the vortex of dissipation; on her propensity to play rested *his* chief hope,—he wished to see her embarrassed, and in debt, but not to Lord Charles Dash—the designs of his Lordship were *too* palpable to be misunderstood, and the eye of jealousy *too* keen not to see through every disguise,—he could not bear any other man should take a liberty he *dared* not to think of; he saw Lord Charles's presumptuous hope in his eyes—but how to rescue her, in that moment, from a situation so desperate?

It happened that Ellen at that instant looked up, her brow, no longer the throne of
Momus,

Momus, was contracted and overcast; a tear trembled on her eyelid, and her cheek lost its lovely bloom,—Lord Claverton could not bear this, he advanced to her, and presented his pocket book—"Lord Castle Howel, Madam requested me to deliver you this, and expects you at home as soon as possible."

Ellen glanced her eye at the book, she saw it was not her husband's, and her first impulse was to return it to Lord Claverton,—in the vague, indeterminate manner, in which she held the book, Lord Charles had also an opportunity of seeing Lord Viscount Claverton's name;—rage filled his lordly bosom; Ellen met his eyes, they were so hateful, and his touch (for he had again taken her hand) so petrifying, that she received the book, and took notes out to the amount of his debt, and turned from him without speaking. Mrs. Morley, exulting in her own success, declined going home,—the Countess, who was too much agitated however
to

to stay for her, ordered her servants, and on the first flight of stairs met Lord Claverton, "Oh my Lord" said she, half sobbing, and involuntarily giving her hand, "from what a situation did you relieve me!" He respectfully bowed, restraining every desire to imprint his lips, where so late he had seen Lord Charles's.----

Ellen happened to look behind her, and saw Lord Charles leaning over the banister, she quickened her step, and handed by Lord Claverton got into her carriage, "I shall see you soon, my Lord,"---he bowed---Lord Charles brushed by, and the vis a vis drove off.

Lord Castle Howel was subject to inveterate head aches, which obliged him, as soon as he was seized with them, to lay down, during these paroxysms, he could not bear the least noise,---he happened, unfortunately for our heroine, to be in one of these fits at her return,---she resolved, during her ride home,

home, to confess her fault, tell him of Lord Claverton's kindness, and vow never more to touch a card; but after sleeping on the matter, she found *confession* of aggravated faults *not quite so* pleasant.—Lord Castle Howel was not recovered, and the repetition of a story so reprehensible, might bring on a relapse; the old ladies complimented her, on her early return home the night before, and she could not resolve to tell them how little merit she had in that matter.

Lord Claverton did not appear next day, it was one of her nights, neither he nor Lord Charles attended, they had both cards, and were used to be among the first,---she, however, declined play, to the infinite pleasure of her doating husband; never were the ladies more pleased with her, and never was she more deserving their favour,---the event of the last evening left an impression on her mind, which the more she indulged, the more she was shocked.

A thou-

A thousand men had sworn she was divine; had told her of the lustre of her eyes, the beautiful transparency of her complexion, her fine turned arm and Medicien form, her grace, her wit, had been the theme of praise from the million, but there was a decorum observed in the flattery, the harsh strokes were softened off; the innocence of her look, and propriety of her manners, awed libertinism; and in the midst of gaiety, no word, no action, escaped, to inspire hope in the heart of depravity, from one, whose life and conversation had been under the influence of pure minds, and faultless examples: if she acted without foresight, it was because she wanted experience, to point out dangers *she* did not know existed; if she talked without thought, it was because she was used to look inward, where she found no one sentiment condemned by conscience, or restrained by delicacy; but now she had the "debtors pillow," his debasement, his anxiety, and her purity, recoiled, from a recollection of the voice and manner of the professed debauchee,
who

who had insulted her with sentiments, as humiliating as hateful.—Many were the times and opportunities, when Lord Charles might have availed himself of being alone with her, to give the conversation the same indecent turn, had he not been restrained by respect; that *respect* she had deprived herself of; and the consequence of making her only proper protector acquainted with his presumption, might be fatal.

So far from loving play, cards were her aversion, before an inconsiderate compliance with fashion, tempted her to game; could they be less so now, when the consequence was so injurious to her peace and honor?

Mrs. Morley's insinuation, that the Earl had been guilty of duplicity, in his assigned reason, for not supplying her with money, had not gained the smallest degree of credit, even when it seduced her into so fatal an error; and now, seated by her husband, whose eyes fondly fixed on her, spoke tenderness

derness unutterable, the calumny pierced her heart ; and she endeavoured to reconcile her feelings to her conscience, by renewing those attentions, he so well deserved, but which dissipation had deprived him of.—

Lady Gertrude hinted, she was expected to be more with her guests ; she complained of fatigue, and begged her ladyship would apologize,---the company were as usual select for supper ; Lady Castle Howel knew nothing of expence, *that* was the department of her complaisant sister-in-law, she was only solicitous to have her table look as well, or better, than other persons of her rank ; it was particularly magnificent this night, but besides Lord Charles Dash, and Lord Claverton, Lady Margaret found another *absentée*, Dr. Macsheat had not attended, nor any more than the other gentleman, sent a card ; the company stay'd late, but Lady Castle Howel's indisposition was an apology for *her* early retiring.

Ah ! how unconscious was she of the sorrows that awaited her ; how often did she afterwards

wards regret, that an eternal sleep had not for ever closed her eyes ; doomed to weep for the mere inadvertencies of heedless youth, as for the blackest crimes.

Lord Charles Dash was, in respect to modern dissipation, an improved picture of his illustrious father ; the most noble, and puissant Duke of Dash, Marquis Squandervelt, Viscount Sterling, Baron Dunder, knight companion of the most noble order of the garter, of his majesty's most wise and honorable privy council, and one of the first, and most ancient ornaments of the British peerage. Lord Charles Dash, second son to the above mentioned noble personage, was six foot high, colonel of a regiment of horse, and a member of parliament ; he swore fluently, gamed immoderately, made love indiscriminately, won more money, fought more duels, ruined more women, and was more the *thing*, than any Lord of his standing in the kingdom : it is

need-

needless to say he was an 'immense favourite of the ladies.

The noble Duke his father, it is but justice to allow, did all in the power of example, to render his sons as famous as himself,—he had three leading traits in *his* character,—he borrowed every man's money, seduced every man's wife, and broke every man's confidence, on whose weakness or credulity he could practise; he shortened the days of two amiable wives, women of virtue, character and fortune, and he was now kept in the most servile subjection, by a low bred woman, who had neither.

Had Lord Charles's understanding been dignified by more noble pursuits, it would have been respectable, he had read much, made the grand tour, conversed with an elegant fluency, not only in his mother tongue, but in the languages of most of the European courts, and to finish his portrait was immensely rich.

In an age, when Sir Robert Walpole's axiom, that every man had his price, may be almost transferred to the other sex, Lord Charles Dash's success will not be doubted; but excess of dissipation had so far blunted the keen feelings, which had carried him headlong in pursuit of all that was fair and new,—it was not *mere* beauty, no; nor modesty, that could *now* touch a heart, surfeited with sweets; it must be something extraordinary,—out of the common run: one whole month, he had followed a child under fourteen, whom at last having purchased of her venal parents, at a very high price, he returned to them, and the town, after three days possession: he had even felt a momentary desire for the English Ninon, after she had passed her grand climacteric,—the lady, who well knew how to make the most of his folly, accepted a handsome gratification for receiving, and a still handsomer one, for dismissing him.—

He was invited by Lady Daub, on the first night of our heroine's appearance at her assembly,

assembly, to see a rustic, whom the Earl of Castle Howel had married, for the avowed purpose of propagating the species, a mere girl, ignorant, and inexperienced, but extremely beautiful.—

He found her to surpass all he had expected in the last description, but, tho' young, and new to the circle of fashion, graceful, easy and sensible; he was introduced by the Earl himself, at an accidental meeting in Hyde Park, but did not then see enough of her to be sure Lady Daub's picture was not overcharged,---he was however a lost man, from the instant he became sufficiently acquainted, to be treated without reserve, and taking it on the credit of *usage le monde*, doubted not, but a young girl, who for riches would marry an old man, might, on certain conditions, be induced to intrigue with a young one,---this settled maxim, left him at liberty to sigh, and look, and look and sigh,---to plan,---to reconnoitre---and, as

occasion offered to act : with an air of the utmost indifference he won her money, and with an insinuating politeness offered revenge ; ---still he was fortunate ; they doubled stakes, ---fate was still obdurate ; he pressed her to go on---she had already exceeded the limits of her purse—she ventured and was still a loser ;—overwhelmed with shame and vexation, she apologized for not paying him—he entreated she would not mention a circumstance that rendered him happy.

An opening was made at the loo table,---he asked her to change her luck—fortune could not always persecute so lovely a votary ! —he entreated he might be her banker, and putting his purse into her hand, led her to the loo table.

The party received her with every expression of politeness, and the secret joy a certainty of winning inspires—she hardly knew what she was doing, or going to do, she however reckoned what money was in the purse,

purse, and (with a heart aching with a sensation, which could be neither called regret, or self reproach, and yet an indefinable mixture of both,) sat down, her honorable friend standing at her chair back.—For some time she won, and inwardly exulted, she could at least pay off part of her debt of honor—she arose and ordered her servants; on looking round the table so many crest fallen visages met her eye; so many voices entreating her stay; her servants not being ready, and a something in her bosom which pointed her going with a large sum, from a table where she had sat so short a time, as selfish, she defeated herself, and lost every shilling, both of what she had won, and what Lord Charles had lent her; become desperate by this sudden turn, she played on credit, till the indolence of her adversaries towards *her*, and their eagerness to *each other*, shewed her of how little consequence she was, in her present stripped, and bankrupt situation, and her motion to go was no longer opposed.

Hardly able to support herself, she was led to her carriage by Lord Claverton. It was to pay the debts incurred at the loo table, Lady Gertrude had supplied her ; for shame of the amount of the sum she owed Lord Charles, confidence in his politeness, hopes that the Earl's liberality would soon enable her to pay him, or perhaps the more rational design, of taking some fond moment to confess to him, and him alone, her extravagant folly, prevented her mentioning the whole amount of her debt : With such a scheme in his head, as the seduction of the young Countess, brought nearer perfection than he could have hoped, in so short a time ; how could so noble a spirit be otherwise than enraged, when another noble spirit insinuated itself between him, and his prey ? he heard of Lady Castle Howel's penchant for Lord Claverton, but as from his Lordship's extreme caution, he appeared to be rather an observer, than an admirer, concluded the report was either untrue, or which was just the same, the intrigue over — when therefore with so little ceremony,

Lord

Lord Claverton put it in her power to pay her debt of honor to him ; which to say the truth, had been done in so delicate a way, that the eye of candour might have imputed it to honorable friendship ; he, who judged of other men by himself, and had long been acquainted with Lord Claverton's disposition and character, had no doubt but his Lordship's designs, were similar to his own ; too proud for contention, too peevish for contradiction, and too much in love, to act with reason or consistence, he set himself down, for an injured man, and Lord Claverton for the person who had injured him.

The Viscount's sentiments were equally vindictive ; both their noble bosoms burned with rage, and panted for revenge ; Lord Charles sent Lord Claverton a challenge, which, tho' fighting was a trade he had resigned, he accepted, and made every preparation for the glorious on-set, neither of these great minded noblemen, once recollecting, there was a husband in the world, to

F 4

whom

whom they were offering injuries, human nature could not bear, or honor forgive.—

CHAP. IV.

THE meeting took place in Hyde-Park, at eight on the evening their absence, so much surprised the Ladies in Grosvenor Street; Lord Claverton was dangerously wounded, and Lord Charles set off for the Continent, till the event should be known.

Most unfortunately for our heroine, Lord Charles had an humble friend, who flattered both his vices, and his follies; from this man none of his great designs, or achievements were concealed; he had progressively been
the

the confidant of his admiration; his hope, his expectations, and finally of his jealousy, which with additions, suggestions and inferences, Captain Durell (not being enjoined to secrecy, or bound to veracity) took special care should be fully comprehended at every breakfast table in the fashionable circle; but had not the affair been thus en train, it would have been impossible to conceal it from the family, whose honor, and whose peace, was thus wantonly exposed to the idle and malevolent gossip of the town; for Lord Claverton, constant to his medical friend, had entrusted him with the duel, without hinting at the cause, and directed his attendance in the Park.

Dr. Macfhean was not wanting in medical skill, but perceiving from the situation of the wound, and the weak constitution of his patron, that it would be attended with danger, immediately sent for two surgeons, and a physician of the first eminence to his assistance.

Neither were these gentlemen enjoined to secrecy, so that the duel, with what particulars Captain Durell chose to add, was not only in private circles, but in every coffee-house in town.—

The two letters we subjoin were carried to the bed side of Lady Frances, and Lady Gertrude Howel, while Dr. Macfhean and Lady Margaret were shut up in her ladyship's dressing room, and the Earl was reading in his closet.

For Lady Gertrude Howel.

“Lady Autumn, and Miss Pendegrass
 “most sincerely condole, with Lady Ger-
 “trude Howel, on the unfortunate denou-
 “ment in her family; Lady Autumn ex-
 “pressed her ideas, as delicately as she
 “could to her friend Lady Gertrude, on
 “the unequal alliance, certainly Lord
 “Castle Howel might have found a bride
 “under the prudent direction of Lady Ger-
 “trude,

“trude, more approximating to the opinion
 “of his friends, as well as more suitable to
 “himself; but what can be said? Miss Pen-
 “degrafs supposes a divorce must ensue, she
 “is shocked at the depravity of the age, two
 “illicit connexions at once, is a refiné-
 “ment on vice, decreed for the beautiful
 “Countess of Castle Howel.—Lady Autumn
 “hopes the report of the Earl’s fortune be-
 “ing deranged by his wife’s extravagance is
 “not true.—

For Lady Frances Howel.

“DEAR FANNY.”

“I am dying with the tooth-ache (Lady
 Daub’s teeth were *all* of Parkinson’s manu-
 factoring) “or should have flown to you;
 “your sufferings, my dear creature, must be
 “intense, and I feel them very sincerely,
 “but the thing itself is no more than I
 “foretold; if men will make wives of girls,
 “who should be dressing their dolls, they
 “must expect the consequences, but that

“ fly devil, Lord Charles ! I declare, I am
“ seriously angry with him, to take advan-
“ tage of such a poor simple young thing ;
“ as to Claverton 'tis an old affair I find,
“ Morley was in all her secrets, adieu come
“ to me as soon as possible, that I may tell
“ you every thing I've heard.

Yours,

HERMOINE DAUB.

The ladies rubbed their eyes, and read the notes over and over—without understanding a syllable, Lady Frances being the most alert of the two was soon in her sister's room.—

“ I have the oddest letter from Lady Daub,” said she.

“ Read this note from Lady Autumn,” answered Lady Gertrude.

Their astonishment increased, they hurried down stairs, Lady Margaret and Dr. Macsbean

Macfhean joined them;—the Doctor's information of the duel was circumstantial, but from his own knowledge he could speak no further; each of the spinsters ordered her chair.——

At Lady Autumn's, Lady Gertrude heard, that her niece had intrigued with Lord Claverton, both before, and since she was married, that she had forsaken him for a lover, who had it more in his power to support her extravagance—that however Lord Claverton having furnished her with money, to pay some play debts, it had betrayed the connexion to Lord Charles Dash, who challenged Claverton and killed him.—

Lady Gertrude's astonishment is not to be expressed, and prone as she was to take the worst part of every story that reached her, a constant observation of the conduct of Lady Castle Howel, from the instant of finding her at her grandmother's feet, till that moment, had given her
her

her so different an impression of her heart, notwithstanding her occasional levity, that she could not help treating what her good friends, Lady Autumn and Miss Pendegrass were saying, with every mark of incredulity.

The Ladies were resolved to convince her of her family misfortune ; they were perhaps apprehensive, she would not only remain under her present security herself, but communicate it to the rest of the family, for whose honor, they protested, they were too much concerned, to suffer it to be injured, by a wicked young woman ; Captain Durell was therefore sent for, and he, on authority of Lord Charles's confidence, declared, that he knew he had supplied Lady Castle Howel with several different sums of money, to a large amount ; that Lord Charles was a man of the world, and attached, as he certainly was, to the fair sex, yet it was not to be supposed, he would part so liberally with money, for which he was to receive no consideration ; the Captain would be grieved to advance

advance any thing to a lady's prejudice, on mere conjecture; but he thought he might venture to assert, Lord Charles knew in general, what he was about; with respect to Lord Claverton, that matter was beyond a doubt, and Lord Charles, when he sent the challenge, declared to *him* that Claverton intrigued with Lady Castle Howel, who had jilted him.——

Lady Gertrude was really affected; "If this be true," cried she, sighing, at the probable disappointment of ~~a~~ her hopes.

True! Miss Pendegrass declared it was past all doubt, and that she had always observed a certain cast of countenance in Lady Castle Howel, that disgusted *her*, and believed, she had spread her snares for more than Lord Charles, and Lord Claverton—Sir Solomon Spindle.——

Lady Gertrude interrupted her with impatience; "what day did this unfortunate
affair

affair happen ?"—The duel, Captain Duren informed her, was yesterday, but the transaction which occasioned it was the day before, at Mrs. Stewart's. Lord Charles having liberally furnished Lady Castle Howel with money, to pay some play debts, accidentally saw Lord Claverton give her his pocket book for the same purpose.—

" Good God !" exclaimed Lady Gertrude, " some mistake, some inexplicable mystery is in all this, for I myself gave her money to pay play debts the same day."

Lady Autumn, and Miss Pendegrass laughed out, at this, and congratulated their friend, on being added to the number of dupes made by the little welch novice.

Lady Gertrude took rather an abrupt leave, and ordered her chair to Lord Claverton's, where she found the street covered with straw, the hall door on jar, and the porter in waiting, who put her name on the
plate,

state, but could only say, his Lord was ill, without a syllable that led to the information, she was in pursuit of.—

Lady Frances, on her part, found her friend's dressing room crowded, the company highly diverted with every thing, but Lord Claverton's danger, which as it involved Lord Charles in some difficulties, was really tremendous—*here*, it was, tho' entirely believed, treated as a thing of course, and from seeing Lady Frances abroad, half the company concluded, the family would think of it in the same way; Lady Daub however, seeing her Fanny look very grave, took her into her closet, and eagerly repeated *her story*. " Lord Charles, who, dear creature, was but too generous, had been very lavish of presents to Lady Castle Howel, and among other things of great value, gave her a pocket book, in which were bank notes to a very considerable amount, that happening to see Lord Claverton take out a pocket book at Mrs. Stewart's, he fancied it like,
and

and indeed it proved to be the one, he had given Lady Castle Howel; "now you know Fanny," added her ladyship, in the prettiest lisp imaginable, "that was too bad—Lord Charles challenged and killed Lord Claverton. I am sorry the girl did not know better, they say, my dear, she is with child, can you guess at the father?"

Poor Lady Frances could not speak for some minutes, but as her's was the sort of mind that, a little conscious of its own faults, was, if not more lenient, more credulous, to those of others, she implicitly believed the whole story, and far from feeling any delicate embarrassment on the occasion, resolved to be, if possible, the person who should first carry this pleasant news to my Lord.—

She was however mistaken, for tho' she reached Grosvenor-Street long before her sister—the business was done.

Mrs. Morley, who could not, at this juncture, for the world, visit the Countess, was
however

however not under the same difficulty with Lady Margaret, having called, in her way from Lady Daub's, at every door where she could get admittance at that early hour, and having, to her infinite gratification, found the matter was past doubt, and Lady Castle Howel's fun set, she ordered her footman to rap with great caution at the Earl's door, and enquire for Lady Margaret Howel.

Mrs. Morley's name was announced, Lady Margaret was for being denied, but the Dr. who could (if he would have spoken out) have cleared the matter as far as related to Lord Claverton, had yet his doubts about Lord Charles; the rage in which his patron prepared for the duel, convinced him *be* at least *thought* he had cause for jealousy, he was therefore curious to hear what Lady Castle Howel's most intimate friend would say on the subject, and at his instance she was admitted.

Mrs. Morley was too pretty to be ever out of humour with her own features, yet
on

on such an occasion it was proper to *seem* sad, she entered with a demure step, and down cast look, and being seated, sighed and drew out her handkerchief.

“ Lady Castle Howel is not up, Madam,” said Lady Margaret—but,—

“ Oh! my dear Lady Margaret, don’t name her, poor unhappy woman, ’tis all over you know, one can’t ever think of visiting her; but how are you? and how is the good Earl?”

The good Earl was at the door, he was crossing to his Lady’s dressing room, but on hearing her friend’s voice, supposed she was already down; at his sudden entrance Lady Margaret turned pale, and Mrs. Morley reddened; his ideas were confused, something he thought had been said about Lady Castle Howel, he could not understand, and the looks, both of Mrs. Morley, and his sister, were alarming.—

“ What

“What is the matter, Madam?” said he, hastily, “you were speaking of my Ellen!”

“Ah! my Lord, your tendernefs, your well known indulgence,” answered Mrs. Morley, in a whining tone, “for that ungrateful.”—

Lord Castle Howel was not disposed to be trifled with; “who? what did she mean?” asked he in a stern terrific voice.

Mrs. Morley was awed—she hesitated.

Lord Castle Howel was in agonies.—

Dr. Macsheat then calmly said, he feared Lord Claverton was dying.

“What is that to me? or Lady Castle Howel?”

“Lord Charles Dash challenged him.”—

“Why

“Why am I tortured about that? where is my Ellen? where?” his looks betrayed the perturbation of his mind, and Lady Margaret endeavoured to sooth him, by saying, the Countess was yet in bed.—

Winifred was called, who said she was in a sweet sleep, “cot pless her.”

Mrs. Morley was now more herself, she shrugged her shoulders, cast up her eyes, and sighed as if in detestation of one party, and compassion for the other.—

“For so fine a face” said the Earl, peevishly, “I never saw one so unhappy in expression.”

Lady Frances at this instant entered, and with a vast deal of dignity, took her nephew’s hand, was glad to see him bear it so well, and asked if he had got to the truth of the story.

That there was a story to be told, in which he was concerned, was evident, altho’ it was

not designed he should understand it, he therefore only replied, he would thank Lady Frances to tell it the way *she* had heard it, which she very obligingly did, and to her honor be it spoken (for such a tale) with very few additions of her own..

The Earl was thunderstruck, he trembled with indignation, and every throbbing pulse bore testimony to his feelings, but let my reader not believe the horrid story, thus unconnected, and unsupported, could find credit in his manly breast—Ellen intrigue! the innocent, the chaste, the modest Ellen! for so she had always appeared to him, she a mercenary intriguer! she whose little foibles (the effect as he believed of the pernicious examples of a dissipated age) he had even imprudently indulged! and who, when she signified her want of a greater sum than it was convenient for him to advance, was so cheerfully supplied by his aunt,—she accept money, or presents from a professed debauchee, impossible! he declared his life and fortune

fortune should be devoted to the searching out, and punishing the base inventor of so daring a calumny—He demanded Lady Frances's Author.—

A whole room full of morning visitors at Lady Daub's.—

“And your's Madam!” Mrs. Morley.

She had heard from so many, it was impossible to recollect: now that was a little fib; but as Mrs. Cowley says, fine ladies don't mind fibbing; she knew very well, who had told her; Captain Durell was indeed a married man, but as Mr. Morley was a friendly creature, who kept a good house, and had often a set of jolly fellows about him, and as moreover, Mrs. Morley had a passion for admiration, he found it convenient to be violently in love, without the mortification of disobliging the Lady.—

To her then, as in duty bound, he flew with the news, as soon as Lord Charles set off,

off, by which means, Mrs. Morley had the happiness to be one of the first circulators of the story *herself*, and was actually the person, who carried it to Lady Daub's.—

The Earl, however, swore he would not rest, till his wife's fame, and his own honor was avenged—he called for his hat and was going out, tho' he had not exactly determined where.—

At the foot of the stairs he met Lady Gertrude, just getting out of her chair, so apparently disordered, she was obliged to rest on her servant; and occupied, as the Earl was, by his own feelings, he could not help offering his arm—slow and silent, they ascended; every tongue in Lady Margaret's dressing room, being set going the instant the Earl left it, were stopped at his unexpected return.—

“Oh!” cried Lady Frances, “here is my sister, we shall now know what she has heard.”—

“ She heard ! ” answered the Earl, “ is the demon of detraction let loose in the world ! do you suppose she has heard ! ” —

Lady Gertrude, with a deep sigh, and great gravity of countenance, replied, she had heard *too much*, and then enquired of Dr. Macsnean after his patient.

The Doctor shook his head, and Mrs. Morley applied to her salts in the prettiest manner imaginable.

The, “ I have heard *too much*, ” the sigh, the shake of Lady Gertrude’s head, almost annihilated the Earl ; without understanding why, he sat down, as in expectation of something dreadful, with his eyes fixed on his aunt.

This was entirely a family concern ; perhaps as no person knew the secret terms Dr. Macsnean was in by the favour of Lady Margaret,

Margaret, *he* might be excusable for staying, but what detained Mrs. Morley?

When domestic misfortunes begin to be discussed before a third person, they become, from that instant—at once *judge* and *accuser*; they gratify their curiosity, at the expence of your feelings, and their malevolence, at the expence of your passions; you cannot withdraw a confidence you have unthinkingly reposed, without making them your bitter enemies; they remember the extravagance you utter in your agony, but forget the incitement,—their pity is a triumph over your misfortunes—and their consolation an insult to your distress.—Mrs. Morley fancied she had rendered herself of importance sufficient to excuse *her* stay, and she was dying with curiosity, to hear how the family consultation would terminate.

Lady Gertrude however was more guarded than her sister had been, she made Mrs. Morley a formal courtsey, and withdrew,

followed by the Earl.---Mrs. Morley now chose to be very attentive to Lady Frances, a servant delivered her sister's compliments, and requested her company; still there was one lady left, the one she came to condole, but scarce had she got a word from Lady Margaret, before a second messenger demanded *her* presence;---there was nobody now but Dr. Macsheat, who considering her as the cause why he was not admitted to the family confidence, was ill disposed to *entertain*, or be *entertained* by her; he must visit his patient he said.---

“Oh! do let me let you down, my dear Doctor.”

He gravely told her, his own carriage waited; she had nothing now for it but to order her servant, and the Doctor handed her to her coach.

Lady Gertrude had by this time entered on her history, which agreed in the main points

points with Lady Frances ; the difference was only in the pocket book, which, at Lady Autumn's was Lord Claverton's ; and accidentally seen by Lord Charles, whereas, at Lady Daub's it was Lord Charles's, and given by Lady Castle Howel to Lord Claverton ; but all agreed there had been a duel about the Countess, between two lovers, one of whom at least it was presumed must be a favourite.

“ Good God,” said the Earl, impatiently, “ why do I suffer my heart, to be wrung in this manner, when an angel, on whose brow sits truth, and ingenuity, can and will develop every transaction in which she is concerned, to the confusion of her calumniators, and to the satisfaction of her friends.”

He started up, and was eagerly proceeding to Ellen's room ; Lady Gertrude's prudence again stopped him, she had *revolved* all the likely consequences of this disagreeable business in her own mind ; of worldly wisdom Lady Gertrude had more than her share ; of

worldly affections *none*,---the disappointment of her heart had shut up every avenue to the softer attachments ; resentment, jealousy, slighted love, and wounded pride, had all settled into a calm, and most inveterate hatred ; she had more pride, more sense, and more resolution, than her sister, in consequence of which, tho' in trifles they were for ever quarrelling, in *essentials*, *she* always carried her point, not by the coincidence (for she would dispute inch by inch) but by the weakness of Lady Frances.---

To the hatred then she felt for her perfidious lover, life and all its enjoyments had been sacrificed ; and as her sister had equal cause of displeasure, *hers* had been kept alive by the tenets, pride enforced, both in the precept and example of Lady Gertrude ; the hope of cutting off the man she hated, the family she abhorred, from the inheritance she knew they languished after,---was the first consideration on earth to her---allowing Ellen to be all she had heard, still she
was

was pregnant, the main end of the Earl's marriage,—as far as it concerned *her* was answered; what then might not be feared from the effect this discovery, whether true or false, might have on a form so young and delicate? all their present hopes might be in a moment blasted, and should the worst be proved, no future ones could arise.

To these reflections and conclusions Ellen owed the present protection of Lady Gertrude, who became her warm advocate, and pledged *her own* honor, for that of the Countess. The mind of man is easily persuaded to credit what it wishes, the Earl fondly acceded to all she advanced, and in spite of the recollections of Lady Frances, and the dead cold silence of Lady Margaret, triumphed in the innocence of his Countess.

Lady Margaret not quite so sanguine about the heirship of the title and estate as her aunts,---recalled innumerable instances of Lord Claverton's admiration of Ellen, and

(prior to her brother's widowhood) foretold he would make her a Viscountess,—she had even hinted this to her brother, who far from being displeased, had once congratulated himself on having contributed to the endowments of a young woman, he was sure was born to move in an elevated sphere; she had often mentioned this to the Doctor, as well as her observations on his continued attention; but however ardent the Doctor's admiration of Lady Margaret, he was not subject to *weakness* many a *wiser man suffers* for; he was master of all the Ladies secrets, but his own were uncomeatable.—Nevertheless, on the credit of her own conjectures, Lady Margaret was not so sure of Ellen's innocence, as her brother and aunts appeared to be.

As to Lady Frances, the spirit of contradiction was raised in her, and a bench of bishops could not have inspired her with an atom of charity; she withdrew from the consultation to her own apartment, and made
her

her woman confidante of the story ; this person, who was a true waiting maid, could add *another* very *suspicious* circumstance—which was, that Joseph, Lord Claverton's man, visited the Countess's favourite woman every day of his life ; Lady Frances returned in haste with this intelligence, but all further proofs had by this time become unnecessary.

Lady Gertrude had exerted all her powers of rhetoric to carry her favorite point, which was to conceal every circumstance of the affair from the Countess, till after her accouchement ;—to accomplish this, she requested the Earl would feign urgent business in the north, that they might immediately set out for her seat, where it would be impossible any of the slanders invented against her could reach.

Lord Castle Howel objected to the last part of the plan, tho' he very readily acceded to the other, on the ground, that a sudden removal from the capital, without an

explanation due to his wife's injured honor, would confirm, instead of contradict the slander; but Lady Gertrude was too deeply interested not to persist; how, she demanded, could Lady Castle Howel's repose be undisturbed, while such a mortifying matter was in agitation? and Winifred passing the door at that instant, to answer her Lady's bell, they agreed to go to her dressing room, and inform her of the intended, and immediate journey.—She had not yet left her bed chamber and the diamond ornaments she wore the preceding night lay on the toilet in her dressing room; Lady Gertrude, from a natural impulse of female restlessness, sauntered towards the table, and tho' she had seen them a thousand times before, looked at her bracelet, and admired the likeness of the Earl,—who also approached the table; but reader, feel for his surprise, his anguish, his distress, when he saw, lying in her jewel case, as he was going to deposit the bracelet in it, a pocket book with—

“ Lord

“Lord Viscount Claverton” on the cover; trembling he took it in his hands, and on opening, found a number of bank notes, which he well knew he had not given his wife, his agitation increased, he felt all the agonies which ingratitude and ill requited love can inflict on a sensible mind.

The faithless conduct of his first lady had opened on him by degrees; she had robbed herself of his esteem, and he was not a man fondly to *love* where he could *not* esteem; before he suspected the fidelity of the *wife*, he ceased to respect the *woman*; but *here* he had treasured every hope of joy;—entirely confiding in principles, he thought invulnerable, in innocence he had made it the business of his existence to adore, in sentiments he fondly believed came spontaneous from a heart devoid of guile; how could he support himself under a conviction, of the guilty depravity of the woman he doated on? his lips turned blue, cold drops of sweat rolled down his forehead, and tears burst

G 6

from

from his eyes, unattended by any of the softening, the soothing sensations which generally accompany them,—her voice, gentle as it always was, roused him, he started at the sound, and rushed out of the room, the pocket book in his hand.

Lady Frances became vociferous in praise of her own discernment, and her sister was obliged to use force, aided by her woman, to get her out of the room, before the Countess entered.

Lady Margaret, uncertain what measures her brother would adopt, tho' clearly convinced of his injuries, made an effort to get a way before she entered the dressing room, but could not.

Lady Castle Howel said, she "believed she had slept very late, but her dreams had been so troublesome she was fatigued instead of refreshed,"---Winifred told her the Earl was there, "where was he gone?"

Lady

Lady Margaret sat pinching the corner of her handkerchief ; but so engrossed was Ellen by her dreams, and unconscious of any cause for her silence,—she did not perceive it.—

Lady Gertrude now entered, without one particle of compassion for her, whom she esteemed to be guilty, and knew to be ruined ; but with a sufficient solicitude about her favourite scheme, to hide all her real feelings, and to affect those which the exigence of the moment might render most politic ; she had, in the short time she had been absent persuaded Lady Frances into the necessity of being quiet, or giving up all hope of an heir.

Lady Castle Howel, with a smile, which the harmony and innocence of her soul could only light up, gave her aunt the salutation of the morning, and her breakfast equipage being before her, desired Winifred to let the Earl know she was up.

CHAP. V.

WINIFRED returned, my Lord was gone out, the Countess was surprised—"what without seeing me?"—Lady Gertrude took a dish of tea, "some extraordinary business, I suppose," continued she,—"but not to speak to me! this is really new, and I feel myself affronted," she had a head-ache, and would pay a few visits, and ride in the park, would Lady Gertrude go?

Lady Gertrude, equally fearful of leaving her by herself, lest any body in the house should drop any thing, or of her going out, where she would be sure to be affronted, said, after some pause, that she believed the Earl was ingrossed by some particular business, which perhaps could not be settled without a journey into the country, and in *that* case,

as

as they should be hurried, it would be best to stay at home.

The Countess acquiesced—she hoped the business was not of a nature to vex the Earl, and as to the journey into the country she should rejoice at that;—her harp was brought, she played, and sung; Lady Gertrude liked music, and Lady Castle Howel's voice was harmony itself; imperceptibly, and undesignedly, she soothed even the rugged heart of Lady Gertrude, who, while she was warbling a plaintive sonnet, could not help feeling some concern for the fallen state of so charming a creature.—When she ended her song, as if fate was inspiring her with a presentiment of what was to happen, and as if she knew how important it would be to her to make a friend, she began speaking of her situation, and declared her resolution to suckle her own infant,—a subject so grateful to the person to whom it was addressed, added to her cordial temper of mind for the moment, her eyes, “unused to the melting
ing

ing mood," was surcharged with a *stranger*—a *tear* actually stood on her cheek.

Lady Castle Howel saw it—and unable otherways to account for so new an exhibition, concluded her Lord was ill; the fright and agony this fear threw her into is not to be conceived; it was in vain Lady Gertrude assured her he was well, or that she called Lady Margaret to witness it; "where was he? why did she not see him? why would they not send to him?" tears, hysterics, and at length faintings succeeded.

As the day passed, and no tidings of the Earl, the Ladies were themselves alarmed; night came, horrible was the darkness and suspense it brought, no creature in the house went to rest; Lady Castle Howel's senses became disordered, she was in a burning fever, and by day light the next morning, quite delirious.—

Messengers were dispatched every way that could be thought of, and Dr. Macfhean
greatly

greatly recommended himself to the Ladies, by the share he took in their misfortunes.

On the third day of the Countess's illness, which was every moment expected to occasion the entire destruction of the family hope, ---two packets were left at the house, one a blank cover addressed to the Countess, in which was inclosed the pocket book, the other to Lady Margaret, with a letter of attorney properly executed, and a short note to his aunts, requesting them to pay every humane attention to the unhappy woman, who bore his name, till after her delivery; when if Lady Margaret considered her unworthy future personal protection, one thousand pounds a year should be paid to her order, provided she resigned the infant to *his relations*; said he had taken a step that might appear unaccountable to them, with a hope, and it was a unique one, of weaning his heart from remembrances that distracted him; when that was effected, he should go to Castle Howel, he desired his
sister

sister to write occasionally, but strictly forbade her even to mention his wife.

Ellen's good constitution, contrary to expectation, and almost hope, aided her recovery, without the dreaded effect, and she was restored to sensations something less poignant, tho' painful in the extreme; Lord Castle Howel's absence was still unaccounted for, in a way that could satisfy her, she could not doubt his being alive, of this she was assured from all quarters, and the whole family with their domestics proved it, as there was no mourning worn,---but if he was gone abroad,—on business of importance to himself, that which was of consequence to the husband, could not but be interesting to the wife, and even if it were necessary to conceal it from her, out of kindness, how little did such precaution agree with his total neglect of her! Not a line, not even a message had she received; she wearied herself and all about her with conjectures: Winifred was suffered to attend, on condition only of not entering
on

on a subject, now become the common topic of conversation, even among the servants: Joseph was forbid the house, and no letters taken in but what were carried to the ladies for inspection.

So entirely was Lady Castle Howel taken up with her situation, and suspense, it had not occurred to her since her illness, that there were in the world beings of any importance but her Lord; she, who in the midst of gaiety and dissipation wrote once a week to Code Gwyn, had now been near a month without recollecting there was such a place in existence.

Ill news flies swifter than a carrier Pigeon, the rumours spread in the neighbourhood of Castle Howel, and from thence to Code Gwyn were shocking.

Lady Meredith, who knew the heart she had formed, treated them at first with contempt; but when post day came, and the
next,

next, and the next, without a line from Ellen; when the orders at the Castle proved the Earl's absence; when she heard from the housekeeper, that Lady Margaret's commands were positive from *herself*, without the form assumed since the Earl's marriage, "as your Lady desires," &c. &c. dismay seized the whole family, and days now passed without admitting the light of the sun into the best apartments.

Young Evelyn had taken on him the clerical habit, and accepted a cure in a distant part of England: Mr. Meredith thus deprived of his beloved companion resided wholly at Code Gwyn, and attended the duty of his church from thence.

The honor of his family, impeached in the character of that branch of it, so dear, and so distinguished; tinged his cheek with shame; and the misery, which is the sure consequence of a breach of the moral duties of society, and which, if guilty, must be the lot

lot of the unhappy Ellen, filled his sympathizing heart with anguish; hours did the miserable family pass, in regrets that they had suffered so amiable, so dutiful, so affectionate a creature to sacrifice herself for them; for *now*, all the splendid allurements of her marriage had lost their brilliancy.

“ Oh !” said the old Baronet, “ how happy had I been now in your little parsonage, with all my children about me, before dishonor had blasted my name, with my age’s comfort blooming as a cherub in my bosom.”

“ We had but a little while to live,” joined Lady Meredith, bathed in tears, “ that little might have been passed in peace ; we have not more *now* to leave our children, than we should have had *then*, and Ellen, dear unhappy Ellen ! Oh, my child ! my child, comfort was in her looks, alas she may *now* want comfort herself.”

“ She who was the soul of innocence” said Catherine, “ who never breathed a sentiment
that

that would disgrace the brightest heroine of antiquity."

Miss Mary wept.—

Agnes declared the house had been a desert, since Ellen was made a Countess.

"Not even in her infancy," continued Lady Meredith, "was she subject to the faults common in other children, I never knew her tell a wilful untruth, or be guilty of an act of disobedience."

"Disobedience! my love," said Sir Arthur "it was the pleasure of her life, to render *ours happy*, obedience was nature in her, Oh that I never had parted with her."

"What may be her sufferings, friendless and unprotected."—

"But why is she unprotected?" said Mr. Meredith,

Meredith, with spirit; "if she is innocent she."—

"I will venture my soul on her innocence," replied Catherine, rising, "and if I were a man."—

"I will be that man," eagerly interrupted Mr. Meredith, "I condemn myself for wasting so much time in unavailing sorrow and conjecture, even if she is guilty."—

"Oh! my dear son," cried Lady Meredith in an agony of grief, "do not even *suppose* it; Ellen, my gentle, kind, affectionate Ellen! the orphan child of my Arthur, his living picture! Oh, no, it cannot, cannot be.

Yet the depravity of the age of which we are happily ignorant, the luxury, the dissipation, all fascinating, all potent to so young a mind, —then the *integrity*, the *honor* of the Earl. Mr. Meredith sighed as he made these observations.—

"If

“ If you wish me to live, to exist,” answered Lady Meredith, “ think of Ellen as I do ; could a few short months do away a life of innocent rectitude ? could the mild, the benevolent principles of christianity, taught by you, with such care and attention ? could the honorable lessons she has imbibed from the lips of her grandfather ? could the example, the precepts of all our inoffensive lives ; could not all these support her in the practice of virtue, even though opposed by a torrent of vice ? Mr. Meredith had no wish to oppose these sanguine hopes of his mother, his prayer was, they might be realized ; he proposed setting off to London, to see, and know her real situation, as soon as a substitute for his church duty could be found ; and he arrived just as Ellen was recovered sufficiently to think of airing in the park.——

Her intention to go out was violently opposed by the Ladies of the family.

Ellen was astonished ; what, “ not to air ! not to call on her particular friend ! but a-propos of friends, bring the porters list,—astonished, as she had been, two minutes before, it now increased, not a single name had been left ; “ what does all this mean ? ” asked she with great anxiety ;—“ has not Mrs. Morley been here, nor Caroline Holt nor the Wilmers ? nor ”——

“ *Nobody*, so that you see, Ma’am,” said Lady Margaret drily, “ you have no visits to return.”

There was something in Lady Margaret’s manner which spoke *more* than her words.—

“ Well,” answered Ellen, spiritedly, “ as I see there is a mystery I am not to develop, and as you say, *Ma’am*, I have no visits to return, I will at least breathe the fresh air,” and she rang for her carriage, when in bounced Winifred, regardless of the haughty and imperious constraint, insisted on by the

VOL. II. H maiden

maiden Ladies, who, since the Earl's departure, had governed her with a rod of iron.

"As Cot shall be coot unto me, my Lady, he is come, he is come, to save and defend us from the hands of the Phillistines; Oh Lord," she cried, throwing herself at her Lady's feet in a fit of devotion, plect and praist be thy name, for ever and ever,—“my prayers are heart, he is come, he is come.”

“Where, where?” cried Ellen, darting to the door, in expectation of her Lord.—

The Ladies were enraged at Winifred's rebellion, “who is come? who? were you not commanded not to mention any thing that happened out of your Lady's apartment?”

“Oh the Cot of heaven forbid, I should not tell my poor Lady, she will be delivered out of the paws of Satan;” at this moment they saw Ellen fainting in the arms of her uncle, and Winifred, instead of attending to his repeated call for water, crying,
and

and clinging round his knees ;—the Countess had not doubted, but the step she heard, rapidly advancing up the stairs was her Lord's, her heart palpitated with joy, and unable to proceed further then her dressing room door, she waited with expanded arms, and expecting heart, to receive him ; at sight of her uncle, she was seized with a mixture of joy and disappointment, she trembled, and turned away, but in a moment recovered to a sense of duty and affection, and throwing herself in his arms, was asking after her venerable parents, when perceiving he also had an ashy cheek, that his eyes were suffused with tears, it directly struck her that one or other of the beings she most loved and revered were no more, the idea sunk in her heart, and she dropped lifeless on her uncle's bosom.

The old Ladies were as usual in terror, they blamed Mr. Meredith, scolded Winifred, and were as busy about Ellen, as the respective postures of himself and her,

with Winifred kneeling, and clasping her arms round both, would permit; Ellen was conveyed to a sofa, and before her recovery, Mr. Meredith understood it was the Ladies wish he should speak to her only on the welfare of the Code Gwyn family, till he received further instructions from them.

The weakness, and lassitude, which the late severe indisposition had left on our heroine, was increased by the event of this morning; life could with difficulty be kept in her, while Mr. Meredith was answering her fond and anxious inquiries after his father and mother; one by one she made him inform her of the welfare of his sisters, and then finding herself much exhausted, was persuaded to lay on her bed—and Winifred, spite of her tears, entreaties, and promise to obey orders, commanded to retire.

Lady Gertrude continued with her, and Mr. Meredith withdrew to hear the history of his niece's dishonor, from two women de-

void of candour, and deaf to the small still voice of female charity.

The dissipation, extravagance, and thoughtless turn of the young Countess were exaggerated; the tenderness, indulgence, and an unlimited confidence of her husband, adduced in aggravation of all her faults; with the history of the gaming incident, and the money given her by Lady Gertrude, for the express purpose of paying debts, still owing; then came the finale of the duel, with all its criminal, and corroborating train of circumstances.

A thunder bolt could not have more stunned the simple welch parson; such a series of iniquitous imprudence, to be practised by such a novice, was carrying human depravity beyond what he had conceived to be in nature; again, and again, he asked, and again, and again, was indulged with the heart wounding recital.—Dr. Macshean was announced, he confirmed every title of the story, as far as facts went, but though

Lady Margaret had, in a language he perfectly understood, convinced him, there were unanswerable reasons, why the Earl should remain in his present opinion of his Lady,—he had not the heart to confirm any part of the inferences respecting Lord Claverton, who still languished, with *very* faint hopes of recovery, ignorant of the consequences of his universal gallantry, he had once expressed his hope that the duel would not injure the honor, or peace, of the Countess, and had inquired about her with much solicitude; but the Doctor forbore to hint at her situation, from apprehension of the ill effects it might have on him: That his Lordship was a passionate lover, was a secret he had long been master of, but that he was (as inferred by the world) a *successful* one, was by no means clear to him; but tho' he did not *confirm*, neither did he *deny*, the facts laid down by the Ladies, and Mr. Meredith left the house, with a heart too full for utterance, tho' pressed to dine and make his home in Grosvenor Street.

Unmind-

Unmindful where he was going, he walked at a great pace, revolving on the black tale he had heard, at length, tired of his thoughts, his walk, and the world, he entered a Coffee-house near Charing-cross, and called for tea.—

The hour was now five; a paper lay before him, the first paragraph he read was,

“ A certain beautiful Cambrian Countess,
 “ is recovered from her indisposition, without any *very* fatal consequences; a divorce
 “ will immediately take place, when the
 “ frail fair, is expected to abandon her chere
 “ amie, Lord C—n, and march under the
 “ banner of a noble foldier.”—

Captain Durell happened to sit in the next seat, and read the same paragraph in another paper, with great volubility, to an elderly gentleman; no man in fact could be so well qualified for a public reading of the

said paragraph, as he was the fabricator of it himself.

“Do you think Lord Charles will marry her?” said the elderly gentleman.

“Marry,” replied the Captain, “for a little while, perhaps; no, no, my friend, Lord Charles is not to be so taken in I have a letter from him in my pocket, which explains his sentiments pretty clearly on that head.”

Meredith’s welch blood was boiling, he could no longer contain himself; “give me that letter, sir,” and his eyes flashed fire.—

“Sir!” exclaimed the Captain.—

“I ask your pardon, sir, but it is of importance for me to see the letter, you say you have from Lord Charles Dash, relative to”——here fortunately his emotion was too strong for speech, he attempted to finish, but the effort died on his parched tongue.

The

The Captain eyed him from top to toe, turned on his heel, whistled an Italian air, and left the coffee-room.—

Meredith arose to follow him, but the tremor of his soul shook every limb, and he resumed his seat almost breathless.

The gentleman who had been speaking to the Captain, now with great apparent good humour addressed him.

“The Captain is very profuse in his communications; Lord Charles has an excellent confidante.—Meredith groaned.

“You know the Lady perhaps,”—a deeper groan—

“She is very handsome, but her affair with Claverton was known before that old fool, Castle Howel married her---he is ruined, they say,” a third groan.

“Her extravagance was without bounds, I have known her lose thousands at a sitting. Have you any letters for me waiter?”

H 5

“None,

"None, sir," "very hard that;" turning to Mr. Meredith, he continued, "These fine women give a man a damned deal of trouble, but if one gets them at last, the *trouble* you know, sir (winking) is amply repaid."

Meredith, for the first time, felt a sovereign contempt for the folly of the sex, who could sacrifice to the vice or vanity of so despicable a being, he arose and was leaving the house; when he heard the veteran say to another gentleman,

"Poor fellow, some relation of Lady Castle Howel's I am sure, she is like him; devilish fine creature, do you know her?"

The person answered "he had not the honor."

"Damned extravagant, should have had her myself else."—

Meredith's

Meredith's first impulse was to return and chastise the folly, as well as wickedness, of the hoary braggard, but a moment's reflection, and a recollection of his sacred function, soothed him into the patient bearing of an evil, for which, in its present state, he saw no remedy.

Blasted in her character, abandoned by her husband, what hope of happiness or peace to her, in a world where she was despised? What hope of salvation to the soul, where once every virtue lived, but from a seclusion from the vanities that had undone her.—

He came to London intent on vindicating her innocence, of clearing her fame, but the facts were too glaring to doubt or disprove, "Unhappy girl!" he exclaimed; as he touched the knocker of Lord Castle Howel's door, "how shall I carry thy shame to the hearts of my parents,? yet there it must be buried.

He was admitted to the eating room, the family were at dinner, he was invited to join them, but his heart was too full to think of eating, he declined the invitation, and retired to an adjoining room.

Winifred, who had not ceased watching the door, from the time he went out, now came in on tiptoe, her eyes swollen, and in evident fear of interruption.

"Cot plefs our dear reverent," sobbed she, bathing his hand with tears, "for the lose of Cot take us with you to Code Gwyn, let us co from the tribe of faro, Oh! my tear Lady."—

"Ay, Winifred, your Lady and you have made a sad hand of it,—you have acted very unwisely."

"Yes, indeed, Cot help us, we have brought our pigs to a fine market; there's Mr. Joseph's poor Lort is dying, Oh!" (weeping) "if my Lady knew it she would preak her heart."

"In-

"Indeed!"

"Yes, inteet, and here's our Lord gone away Cot knows where, and there's the two crols ould tivel,—and Lady Margaret, and Dr. Macfhean, such a crew—and to be sure I must not say my foul's my own; no more it is, inteet, nor *pody* neither, Cot help us, and send us back to Code Gwyn, Cot he knows I had rather knit and spin all day, than live here in this cumbustion, and as to my Lady 'tis no kindness to her, that keeps her here. Lady Margaret says, and Cot knows she is as *pad* as the best, so she need not give her pribbles and prabbles; she had better mind how the *Doctor* gets in and out of her chamber, but Cot help us sarvants, we must hear and see, and say nothing."—

"But what does Lady Margaret say?"

"Cot rother, a nasty painted old belzibub, she says as my Lady shall put off her Ladyship, and troop to her *old* hole at
Code

Code Gwyn, because, as why, 'tis the fittest place, as soon as she has brought to bed, if the child (pray Cot bless the baby) is a girl, and take her brat with her, and if (by crace of Cot) the dear baby, is a Lord; why then the old ones are to carry him away, and so part mother and child."—

"And did you hear Lady Margaret say all this?"

"That I did, and I'll take my affadavit; and beside."—

The dinner party being now broke up, Winifred made her escape, praying that the reverend would take her, and her Lady, "back to Code Gwyn, and leave lords and ladies to go to the tivel."—

Mr. Meredith's family honor, his pride, his affections, were equally wounded in this communication of Winifred's; a moment since he resolved to carry her back, disgraced

disgraced as she was, to her natural home, but in her present interesting situation, and of which till now he was ignorant, how could he do *that*? how answer to the dignity of Castle Howel, to the honor of the Meredith's, for an obscure birth, of the legal representative of a noble, and ancient family? an obscurity that might lay the foundation of future doubts, and rob the innocent of its right,—for whatever were the depravities, of which the Countess was accused, the state of her pregnancy admitted no doubt of the legitimacy of her offspring, and he knew the family were too much interested in the event, to neglect any thing for its welfare and preservation; in *that* welfare and *that* preservation, Ellen's health and peace was now the primary object; there was therefore no room for the interference or protection of her friends, no immediate reason to fear, however attached she might be to her errors, she would in her present situation, relapse into them, or that, if she was so culpably disposed, she could effect it
under

under the guard of the Ladies, whose apparent kindness was also secured by the interest they must take in her well doing;—all these reasons co-operating with the several circumstances that had occurred in the course of the day, and which leaving impressions on his mind, that confirmed the history of Ellen's ill conduct, certainly blunted the fine edge of those tender feelings for her, that had brought him to town, he coincided with the wishes of Lady Gertrude and Lady Frances, that he would leave the Countess and her affairs exactly in the situation in which he found them, till after her accouchment, when they promised, should no change of sentiment in the *Earl* prevent it, she should be delivered to the protection of her own family, with the handsome allowance assigned by him;—this agreement was witnessed by Dr. Macsheat, and guaranteed by Lady Margaret, and as nothing further could now be done in the affair, as Mr. Meredith knew how anxious his father and mother were to hear from him,
and

and as he felt it impossible to write, in terms that would not impeach his veracity, without risking his mother's life, he resolved, to the great satisfaction of the Ladies, to return to Code Gwyn, with the same expedition he had left it. Some shrewd people will liken the journey of Mr. Meredith to the old distich of "The king of France, " with twenty thousand men, went up the hill " —and so came back again,"—for say they, what has he done? has he made a single inquiry on behalf of his niece? has he made the smallest attempt to clear her fame, to vindicate her innocence?—No, Mr. Meredith was a plain, sensible and a learned man; he was moreover a christian, in whom there was no guile; he served God, and he loved his fellow creatures; there was, in his opinion, no exigence in the human system that could excuse a falsehood, no motive that could justify one; he was the last to suspect, and the first to forgive an injury, no scheme of present advantage, or future ambition, occupied *his* mind, he took no pains to search out

out the debasements of the heart, it was always enough for him to recognize its virtues, whether *feigned* or *real*; finding in himself no disposition for detraction, he suspected it not in others; when any flagrant act was pointed out to him, his indignation was warm, he reproved, he punished, but at the first dawn of repentance *he forgot*; had he lived in the great world, his credulity would have been a fine field of amusement to the *witty*, and a prey to the designing,—at Code Gwyn it was neither, his example was so respectfully followed, his precepts so truly attended to, and his simplicity of heart so beloved, that an imposition on *him* would have exposed the perpetrator to general resentment; how then could a man so void of guile himself, doubt a relation so attached to probability, so confirmed by circumstances, and so solemnly witnessed by people of (as far as he knew or believed) as great veracity as himself? and certainly the ladies had no interest in defaming the Countess, nor indeed, excepting a few embellishments, did

did they do it, for they implicitly believed her guilty.

The conversation at the Coffee-house was purely accidental, a Captain in the army ! the confidential friend of a Lord ! could *be* be suspected of falsehood ? and the old gentleman, 'tis true, his folly was the most conspicuous thing about *him*, but he had no apparent end to answer in reviling the Countess, at least none our welch parson could discover. The duel was a fact, Lord Claverton not expected to survive, Lord Charles fled, and the Earl had repudiated his wife ; he had seen the fatal pocket book, which still lay in the jewel case on the toilet, open for any inspection, and having no cause to doubt gave up even the hope, to find her worthy the protection he nevertheless resolved to give her.—

Meanwhile Winifred desperate in resentment of the injuries offered her, and intended to be offered her mistress, and courageous
in

in the certainty they had *one* friend now in the house, clamorously insisted on being suffered to attend her, complaint of her behaviour was brought to the Ladies in the hearing of Mr. Meredith.

Some events at Code Gwyn, in which she had been suspected, recurred to his mind, and a transient suspicion of her integrity, shot across the bosom of candour, it was however *but* transient.

This creature loves her, poor poor Ellen! is it come to this? must she then be deprived of the sight of the *only* one who does; while he thought he pleaded for Winifred, the comfort, and consolation of Ellen, was only in his mind, he entreated she might be suffered to attend her lady.—

The Ladies had strong objections, they argued with passion.

Mr. Meredith would not give up the point, *he* reasoned with humanity.—

They

They adduced the danger of her imprudence, and likelihood she would, by betraying the discovery, defeat all their hopes ; he hinted the natural terrors incident to her situation, the satisfaction it must be to see herself attended by the companion of her infancy, one of whose fidelity she was assured.

Fidelity ! they were surpris'd at the expression, from a man of his cloth, what could fidelity infer from a servant, to a woman in Lady Castle Howel' situation.

He apologized, and begged to change it for affection.

They were gloomy and dissatisfied.

But tho' the very essence of mildness, in his general conduct, there were points, on which Mr. Meredith was immoveable ; he felt there was a degree of tyranny, in depriving Ellen of her chosen servant, and substituting another in her room, not warranted by the
Earl's

Earl's orders, and therefore not justifiable in them; and as to think, and speak, was to him one and the same thing; he with equal respect and resolution, remonstrated against so indefensible a measure; the result was, Winifred was ordered in, and restored to her place on condition of secrecy.

"What" cried she "is the reverent then going without us, are we not to go home with you to tear Code Gwyn?"

"*She* might go," Lady Margaret said.

Poor Win's tears were always near, she began to cry and kneel, but Mr. Meredith insisted on her leaving the room.

"If indeed she *wished* to leave her Lady."

Win shook her head and wept aloud.

"There was no objection."

"Ay, ay, I see how it is, satan has set his cloven foot on my poor Lady, and her own
4 flesh

flesh and blood is turned against her, but as for poor Winny Griffiths, she will bag her pread from door to door, and carry the tear little paby on her pack, before she will leave her, and as to you, Mr. reverent, you may be ashamed, with a parcel of ould cats to."——

"Old cats," repeated Lady Gertrude, rising with dignity and resentment.

"Cats!" said Lady Frances, her eyes flashing fire.

"This creature should be turned out of the house," said Lady Margaret to Dr. Macsnean.

"Petter not Madam," answered the enraged Winifred, "I shall say a thing or two whenever I am, some folks won't like, so you'd petter let me alone, I care for nobody in the house, but my mistress; and if it was paved with cowl'd I would not stay a day after her

her, Cot knows I love her too well to tell her any thing to vex her, and a petter and more virtuous Lady never lived.

The Ladies smiled contemptuously.

"No, nor did neither for all your pad looks, and with the crace of Cot it will come out, and then our reverent will be ashamed to leave us in the jaws of destruction," so ready to burst with passion, exit Winifred.

The Ladies agreed, nothing could make Lady Castle Howel, partial to so ignorant a creature, but being in her power.

Mr. Meredith modestly adverted to the infant attachment she must have formed, to a girl who had always attended her.

Neither of the three Ladies had any idea of infant attachments.

Wini-

Winifred returned with a message, her Lady was up and requested her uncle would take his tea in her dressing room.—After repeated charges to beware of what he said, he followed Winifred.

Ellen fondly embraced him, and again enquired with anxious tenderness after every part of the family.

Spite of the censure and indignation of his upright heart, he could not see her in her present situation, young, beautiful, far advanced in a state the most endearing, as well as interesting to a husband, who had abandoned her, lost to peace, to fame, and to honor, yet unconscious of the precipice on which she stood, without being extremely moved ; he turned his face away, but tears would flow, hers accompanied him, and a silence ensued broken, only by the audible sobs of Winifred, who not having been bid to withdraw, stood behind her Lady's chair.

Lady Castle Howel recovered her serenity before Mr. Meredith resumed the part he was enjoined to act, and with great tenderness said, she had been extremely affected by his agitation when first she saw him, supposing it occasioned by some melancholy event at Code Gwyn; but relying on his assurances, that all were well there, she could now account in a different manner for the distress that seemed to overpower *him*, “you weep my dear uncle, and it is for me, my situation, left by my Lord at a time when”—she hesitated, a crystal drop trembled thro’ the silken lashes of her eyes, “ignorant of his fate, shut out of his confidence, an alien from his heart, a constraint on all my actions, is no doubt affecting to my friends; my Lord they *say* is well, he is under no dreadful misfortune—he has his intellects—is at liberty, *can* write to those who share his confidence,—and these also are permitted to address *him*; what I suffered from my fears for his safety, the righteous God, whom you my dear uncle taught me to fear, can only witness.

Mr.

Mr. Meredith shuddered, he looked at her with abhorrence ; what, thought he, has she then acquired confidence to appeal to her God, with a load of unrepented iniquities on her mind ! he met her eye, his own, armed with the calm severity of an accusing angel, he intended should flash conviction into her guilty soul ; but her steady, undismay'd, yet sorrowful glance, spoke no guilt, no conviction ; on the contrary she construed the severe expression of his naturally serene eye, into resentment for her treatment.

“ I knew you would feel for your Ellen, but who, or whatever has been the cause of my sorrows, I forgive them ; it has awakened me from a lethargy, in which all the blessings heaven so liberally bestowed on me were lost ; I had almost ceased to regret our happy parties at Code Gwyn, and I thought—no I did not *think*, till I deeply (sighing) it was too late ; my conduct certainly estranged me from the warm heart of my dear Lord, yet had he but compassion-

ated the youth, the caprice, the weakness of her, he honored with his name; had he waited but a little."——she paused, while Mr. Meredith, all attention, sat in expectation of a full confession of her guilt, she continued, "but these are vain regrets, and it is my only consolation that my heart is cleared from the guilt of intentionally offending him, that my gratitude, and affection is yet inviolable, and that however faulty I have been, the punishment he has inflicted is unjust and excessive; she stopped, waiting but waiting in vain for Mr. Meredith's answer, he was lost in the perplexity of her speech, to him it appeared mysterious, and equivocal! confession, and justification! in the same moment, and in the latter part false in every particular; if guilty, how could her gratitude and affection be inviolate? or how could she impeach the justice of a punishment so mild, for actions so atrocious?—

Finding he did not answer, she again recurred to the family at Code Gwyn, regretted she

she had ever left it, and anxiously asked if he thought she should be allowed to revisit it.

He believed it was not intended to restrain her, after a certain event, from going where she pleased.

“After ! is my Lord then for ever gone ? will he not return to sustain and comfort me ? what never ! am I never to be forgiven ?

“There are offences, Ellen, which it is not in the power of an honest man to forget, tho’ christian charity may induce him to forgive.”

“You make me tremble, sir, are mine of that black description ? what have I done ? for God’s sake tell me ! uncle,—my heart,—

“Yes, Ellen, *your heart* will inform you.”

She started.

Mr. Meredith arose, he advised her to be composed; said the business being finished which brought him to town, he must immediately return, and embracing her, bid her farewell before she could recover from her consternation.

CHAP. VI.

WINIFRED's sorrows however would have vent, she wrung her hands, and wept aloud, "the reverent was gone; they had no friend to stand by them, they were poor miserable wretches, and Cot know'd whether their lives were in safety."

Ellen stood the picture of despair, she repeated "your heart will inform you." She

tra-

traversed her apartment, Winifred still lamenting their hard fate, to be left behind the reverent.

“My *heart*,” said Ellen, looking steadfastly at Winifred, and bursting into tears.

Winifred threw herself on her knees, “for the Lort almighty’s sake, my tear laty, let us co home, what matter the reverent, we shall be as welcome at Code Gwyn as him, and there we can tell our own story, and prove all the lies that has been hatcht.

“And pray my good Winifred,” said Ellen extending her hand, with that cordiality which is sure to flow from a sorrowful heart, when it meets sympathy, “pray what *has* been said? what lies have been told?”

Winifred kissed the white hand thus extended, and forgetting all the old ladies precautions, her own promises, and the consequences of the discovery; stole to the door,

locked it, and beginning from the fatal night at Mrs. Stewart's rout, repeated the story in as many different ways, as she heard it; with however the same conclusions, that Lady Castle Howel intrigued with Lord Claverton, that Lord Charles Dash was in love with her, and had challenged him; that Lord Castle Howel had discovered the intrigue by a book with papers in it he had found, that he was gone abroad, but that he was to be divorced as soon as her lying in was over; to these succeeded a long list of things that were to come to pass, collected from what the servants dropped, and what Win, by dint of industry, could overhear, with here and there a conjecture of her own converted into facts.—

To conceive Lady Castle Howel's agitation the reader must be as innocent and as injured as herself.

Her heart had severely reproached her, for the folly and imprudence of running in
Lord

Lord Charles's debt, because it had exposed her to the insult of his degrading passion, she had also been severely mortified at a retrospect of the last card assembly, where she had not only squandered the money given expressly by Lady Gertrude to pay play debts, but had contracted new ones ; but as to the transaction between Lord Claverton, and her, it had never recurred to her thoughts as criminal, nor could she imagine how it could lead to slanders of so shocking a nature ; so much had her mind been occupied by the unexpected events that had happened since, she had not once thought of his Lordship's debt, the book with the remainder of the notes she remembered to have laid on her toilet, from thence Winifred removed it to the jewel case ; but too ignorant, and let me add, too innocent to enter into every circumstance, as the world had chose to discuss it, instead of sinking under the discovery, as the ladies expected, her soul rose superior to misfortune ; conscious of innate integrity, her heart revolted against her Lord !

"He took me, it is true," said she, "from obscurity, he expanded my mind, and added a polish to the valuable instructions I had from infancy been in the habit of receiving; he brought me into the great world, loaded me with finery, and taught me how much easier it was to be splendid, than happy! he led me into temptation, and deserted me when there!—he left his wife to the injuries and scorn of the pitiless savages, who call themselves well bred; he consigned me to women without hearts, and men without honor!

"Ay, Coz knows," cried Winifred, "and if it was not for the expected heir."

Ellen's colour rose, "I am degraded in the opinion of my venerable grandfather, and his virtuous wife will no longer receive me to her heart!"

"To be sure she will know all, the reverent was never coot at keeping secrets, I warrant the ould tivals will send him home primful."——

"My

" My aunts will blush to hear me mentioned !"

" Ay, I dare say Miss Meredith, is comparing you to all the women with hard names, in her old books."

" My uncles think on me with indignation !"

" Yes inteeet, the reverent for that."

" I have nothing left worth preserving, but the innocent burthen I carry !"

" And that will be taken from you the instant it is porn ; if it is a Lord, the ould ones will have it ; if a Lady, Lady Margaret and the Doctor will."——

Ellen walked about the room in agitation.

Lady Gertrude rapped at the door.

Winifred said, her Lady would not be disturbed! An answer so rude and unusual alarmed her, she retired to communicate it to her sister and niece, lamenting that she had been prevailed on, to suffer Winifred's attendance.—

Lady Frances, having advised the measure, was sure, if any thing had transpired it was from the welch parson.

Lady Gertrude denied that with warmth, she knew he had too much good sense.—

Lady Frances thought him, the greatest fool she ever saw.—

Her sister coolly gave it as her private opinion, that Lady Frances was not a competent judge.

Lady Margaret was just then whispering an important something to the Doctor, so that she did not give her sentiments, but as
neither

neither of the aunts, chose to retract theirs, they waxed both warm and loud! their replies and rejoinders became less and less suitable to their quality, and matters wore a very unpleasant aspect—when one of their women came in to inform them, Lady Castle Howel had ordered the carriage to be at the door at six the next morning, and bid a footman enquire where Mr. Meredith slept.

All animosity now forgot in the common cause, Lady Margaret joined in consultation of what was to be done; the Doctor, it was decreed, should pay the Countess a visit, he sent his name and was admitted.

To his enquiries after her health, she answered decidedly *well*, and withdrew her pulse from his touch.

He observed it was a cold evening, and asked leave to stir the fire.—

She was suffocated with heat, and begged he would not give himself the trouble.

Winifred

Winifred came in with an account of Lord Castle Howel having taken all the horses with him.—

Confirmed by the Doctor.

Ellen directed them to get hired horses.

The Doctor remonstrated against her using hired, or indeed any horses, going out would actually endanger her life, and he concluded his harrangue by hinting, it was the Earl's wish she should not leave her own house.—

“*My house !*” repeated she, indignantly.—

Winifred re-entered and said her uncle left town in an evening coach, as soon as he parted with her.—

Confirmed by the Doctor.

Her countenance, in which a haughty indignation was blended with sorrow, fell at this, she sighed bitterly, and turning to the Doctor, said, whatever constructions might be

be put on the question she was about to ask him, she would be obliged by his candid answer,—he bowed,—she asked if there had really been a duel between Lord Claverton and Lord Charles Dash.

He bowed affirmatively.

“On my account, sir?”

He bowed again, but doubtfully.

The Countess then courtesy'd, and retired to her closet, and the Doctor joined the Ladies.

All now then was discovered, and delicacy, according to Lady Margaret's opinion, out of the question, it was proper she thought to acquaint her with the power invested in them, and what line of conduct it was expected she should adopt.

Lady Gertrude, still politically apprehensive, wished to use gentle means, but allowed

ed it was improper to suffer her to go abroad, without some part of the family.

“And what part of the family, madam, would undertake so honorable an office,” said Lady Margaret, “as the chaproning such a woman? would you Lady Frances?”

“*Me,*” replied her Ladyship, “no, I am too volatile, Lady Gertrude will not I dare say object to an office, for which her gravity so well qualifies her.”

Lady Gertrude frowned,—“if she should assume spirit enough to insist on going out, I cannot see how we can prevent her.”

Dr. Macsheat presumed, that acting by authority of Lord Castle Howel, she might be legally restrained.—

“Where should she go?” asked Lady Margaret, “she has not a friend in the world! the pride of the Meredith’s will reject her,
the

the people she called *friends* here, would not be seen to speak to her; Morley will never let her in, and Lady Mappleton has sent Caroline to her uncle's at Durham, to prevent her seeing her. Where can she go?"

Where indeed! but the mask had dropped, Winifred no longer fearing the tyrants, who so late made her tremble, was still recollecting and still relating, the many malevolent speeches of the Ladies and their creatures.

The contempt of Ellen's authority in the family, the utter neglect of her Lord, the ruin of her character at Code Gwyn, which was the world to her; were a catalogue of injuries that roused into action every faculty of *her* soul; she recollected her husband's unbounded tenderness, his arguments to dissuade her from a too excessive pursuit of pleasure, and regretted she had not attended to them; her extravagance, which had dissipated what would have rendered whole worthy families happy, filled her with shame,
and

and the gentle reproofs she had disregarded aggravated her repentant sorrow ; but with all this, as no angel was more free from the impurity of which she was charged, the pride of conscious innocence, and injured honor repelled the momentary humiliation of self reproach, she felt herself falsely accused, condemned and deserted without being heard.

“ My Lord has abandoned me,” she said, “ but I will not desert *myself*,” and the next morning entered the breakfast room where the Ladies and Doctor Macshead were in close confab ; the air and manner she was enabled to assume astonished them, they involuntarily rose, and struck by the apparent fortitude of her looks, but in contempt of her character instantly re-seated themselves ; Lady Margaret took Ellen’s usual place ; she felt the affront, and on a servant’s answering the bell, ordered a breakfast equipage to be brought to the sofa, where she seated herself.—

The

The two parties finished their morning repast, in gloomy silence, and Ellen ordered her workstand.

Mrs. Morley was announced ; she had figured to herself the poor guilty degraded Countess, suffered to remain in the house thro' the intercession of the Ladies, only till her accouchment ; judging of what her own feelings would be in such a situation, when having no resources within herself, she should be deserted by the world, and confined to the narrow limits of her own apartments ; she fancied grief would have fed on her beauty, mortification humbled her pride, and shame sunk her to the level of the guilty ; instead of which, with the radiant dignity of conscious innocence on her brow, the pride of insulted honor flushing on her cheek, and the collected consequence of innate gentility, she saw and felt the real Lady of the mansion was in her place.

Among Winifred's numerous communications, she forgot the intimacy that had taken place

place between Mrs. Morley and Lady Margaret; Ellen therefore could not but take this visit to herself, but the frivoloty of mere fashionable attachments had no longer charms for her: Mrs. Morley was her companion, nay her seducer in scenes she blushed to recollect, her thoughtless gaiety amused in the moment, but disgusted in the retrospect, and the absence of friendship and sympathy evinced in her neglect, robbed her of all the regard she had felt for her; she nevertheless, with the good breeding natural to her, arose; Mrs. Morley courtesy'd with an involuntary respect, extorted by the manner of our heroine, she blushed, and her eyes unused to be withdrawn on *any* occasion, sought an object where to rest, free from the piercing glance of the elegant Countess; in Lady Margaret's she found so much, both of information and confidence, that turning short, without speaking, she ran up to her friend, shook hands, and tho' she had aired with her the preceding morning, talked of the age that had elapsed since she saw her, and was immoderately

moderately rejoiced to find she was not tormented with the head-ache, of which she had complained.—

Ellen smiled ; the flow of words, warm professions, the friendly actions that *mean nothing* ! amused without mortifying her ; she had no regrets for such little enjoyments and the less they became in her estimation, the more her thoughts recurred to deprivations of more moment.—She resumed her work.

The opera, concert, play, court dresses, visits, &c. &c. were discussed with exactly the same attention to the Countess, as if she had not been present.

Lady Mappleton was announced.

Lady Margaret coloured, “ we must not receive her here,” and darting an angry glance at Ellen, left the room, followed by Mrs. Morley and the two spinsters.—

Lady

Lady Mappleton was a widow of quality and fashion, a woman of excellent morals, unimpeached character, and sound understanding; she was related by marriage to the Castle Howel's, had been left early in life a widow, with two sons and three charming daughters; Ellen had been introduced to, and well received by her, but not till she had got into a circle of acquaintance, and engagements that prevented her following the bias of her heart, in accepting the advances to friendship and intimacy of Caroline Holt, Lady Mappleton's only unmarried daughter: In the vortex of dissipation in which she was constantly emerged, there was no time to cultivate sentiment with the less dissipated; Miss Holt's card was oftener on her table than that of any other person, and she was always pleased to see her, but it very seldom happened she could pay the attention she felt due to this amiable girl.—

Lady Mappleton was visited by most of the description of nobility, who mingled mind in their connexions; her select parties consisted

fisted of the most brilliant geniusses of the age, and her musical meetings, where her daughters were performers, considered among the first private concerts; yet Lady Mappleton, and her family, always found leisure for the elegant attachments of the heart; and to these Lady Castle Howel would have been an invited welcome guest, had she been mistress enough of her time to accept it; but Lady Mappleton had too much sense, and experience not to foresee, the ill consequences of Lord Castle Howel's indulgence, and his Lady's thoughtless extravagance; tho' all her penetration, of which she had a great deal, and observation, of which she was not sparing, had never suggested to her, the probability of the Countess's commencing intriguer.—

Miss Holt's partiality for our heroine, was warm from a benignant heart; tho' of a grave turn herself, she loved her vivacity, and (tho' a woman) admired her beauty; she could not bear the shock of hearing in all parties of Ellen's infamy, and therefore prevailed on her
mother

mother to send her to visit an uncle in the north, from thence she wrote to request she would call in Grosvenor-street, to enquire the fate of Lady Castle Howel.

Lady Mappleton, and her family, were the only connexions, which now, awoke from her delirium, Ellen regretted; Miss Holt had been indeed as neglectful of her as Mrs. Morley, and most likely from the same motive, but there was a purity, a modest confidence, in the character of one, that properly censured the imprudence, which the levity of the other authorized; to the censure of strict propriety Ellen bowed; but she despised the vain triumph of accidental character,—she felt acutely the misfortune that deprived her of the honor and comfort of Lady Mappleton's countenance and advice; her proud heart, which repelled with indignation, the affronts of Lord Castle Howel's family, would have melted in the society of a matron, whose goodness of heart, and fine sense, were at once an earnest of candour and a sym-

a symbol of justice; the former she was sure would not be denied her, and she had no cause to deprecate the latter, she sat ruminating on the good effects of such an interview, and was tempted to go to Lady Mappleton, and in presence of the women she despised, throw herself at the feet of the one she respected, and implore her protection and advice; but while she hesitated, the servants called the carriage, she hastened to the window, her Ladyship at that moment looked up, Ellen's heart sprang to her eyes, she courtesy'd, but had the grief to see,—tho' Lady Mappleton steadily observed her, she did not return the compliment, but drove off, without condescending to notice it;—she turned from the window to give way to her tears, and perceived Lady Margaret at her back, who having seen both the compliment, and Lady Mappleton's neglect of it, who visibly enjoyed the ill natured triumph.—

Whether Lady Margaret had any point to carry in making her desperate, whether any

consequences could be derived of advantage to her from a repetition of the supposed imprudence, which had robbed her young sister-in-law of every blessing in life, will appear in the course of this history ; certain it is, had she been as much bent on *driving* her to extremities, as her aunts were in *avoiding* them, she could not have taken more effectual methods, nor have succeeded better.

In Ellen's establishment, a favourite servant of Lord Castle Howel's, was by her own desire, placed as her footman ; this man, who was proud of the distinction, and who, by his constant attendance on his lady, was better qualified for the office he assumed than any one of the family, (Winifred only excepted) was her advocate from the garret to the cellar ; but as Lady Margaret admitted no doubt herself of Ellen's guilt, it was not to be hoped she would permit a menial servant to give his opinion of the matter, when that opinion so entirely contradicted her's.

Philip

Philip was therefore discharged in disgrace, and forbid to hold acquaintance with any of the servants ; of this circumstance Winifred was reminded, by seeing him pass the window, while her Lady was pensively looking out, and Ellen insisted, with great spirit, he should be restored.

Lady Margaret's answer called forth a reply, that reply provoked a rejoinder ; and spite of all the efforts of the two spinsters to prevent matters from coming to extremity, it ended, in Lady Margaret's insisting on Ellen's giving up the situation she was so unworthy to fill, and retire to her own apartment, with an humble sense of the lenity shewn her—and then, in her presence, ordered the servants to pay no regard to any commands, she might have the temerity to give them.

Winifred unfortunately snapping her fingers at this, and saying, “ the servants, Cot almighty be plect and praisit noes petter how to sarve Cot, and obey their true and

rightful mistress, was bid to be gone immediately, and the Earl's delegated authority produced to enforce these orders.

Ellen read the letter over, and silently returned it to Lady Margaret, while Winifred raised her voice in vociferous protestations, she would tie on the spot before she would leave her Lady.

Dr. Macfhean entered the room.—

Sorrow, pride and vindictive anger, swelled the bosom of the fair Countess, the tear that anguish forced into her eye, was repelled by scorn; her form was raised and she really looked over them all.

The Doctor's conscience smote him, it reproached him for being, in some degree, an accessory to injuries that might occasion the death of the loveliest woman of the age, and of the heir of a noble family; he had recently left the bedside of his patron, whose
mind

mind weakened by present, and appalled by future danger, unveiled some secrets to the Doctor, which convinced him, tho' the Countess might be imprudent, she was not guilty.

Winifred, still vociferous, grew louder and louder; the Doctor whispered Lady Margaret, and proved his ascendancy by the effect of that whisper; Win was ordered out of the room, but suffered to remain in her place.

Ellen declined the officious civility of the Doctor, in haughty silence, and withdrew, with a fixed resolution to avoid all further intercourse with every part of the family.

She reached her apartment, with her head, and heart full; the treatment she had received, in the presence of Lady Frances and Lady Gertrude, gave her an earnest of what worse she might have expected, if the situation, on which all the family hopes hung, was not her protection.—To be considered as a convenience, a mere vehicle, to gratify the vanity

and resentment of one part of the family, and the whim and caprice of the other,—till their own ends were answered, and *then* to be spurned from them, and have her child taken from her, for whose fate she already began to feel an interest, was more than the philosophy of eighteen could bear.—

She would write to her grandmamma, openly and explicitly; she would implore the protection of her grandfather, who with her uncle, would resent her ill usage; Ah! but they were in Lord Castle Howel's debt, would his resentment not be excited by their interference? would he not withdraw his friendship? would he not consign them to the merciless stone hearted Morgan? and what end after all would it answer, but expose them to insult and distress; her character was injured on circumstantial evidence only; but what was her simple *no*, to the *yes* of the multitude; if that *no* was not believed; her grandfather would disgrace himself by receiving her, if it was, he might be ruined by opposing *his*
con-

confidence to Lord Castle Howel's prejudices ; " no," said she, " my uncle condemned without hearing me, he has carried his opinions with him to Code Gwyn, my heart is in the eye of God,—and my fate is in his hands, I will quit this house, and never return to it, till my honor is cleared from the injurious imputations cast on it, but I will not involve my friends in my disgrace.

Winifred, her faithful friend and counsellor was present, watching with staring eyes, and distended mouth, every turn of her countenance, the " I will quit this house," was the happiest tidings she could hear, having every thing in a place, where she had experienced such extreme of good and ill fortune, and where she was, when out of her Lady's presence, exposed to all the second hand airs of the Ladies women, no change in her opinion could be for the worse.

" Cot be plect and praist ! Oh, my poor aunt Griffiths always said, " London was the

tifel's drawing room! when shall we set out? how shall we travel?" and twenty other questions poured from her voluble tongue, and she immediately began to pack up without waiting for the answer, Ellen was indeed little disposed to give.

The provocations she had received, the resentment that glowed in her bosom, and the punishment her absence would inflict on at least some part of the Howel's, solely occupied her.—

Winifred, however, proceeded in packing up the most valuable portables, among which she did not forget the jewel case, which she placed in the midst of a bundle of cloaths without Ellen's observation.

After a silence of some minutes ;

"Where can we go?" said Lady Castle Howel.

"Where

"Where but to Code Gwyn, Cot pless us," answered Winifred, still busy.

The Countess started, "ah.no ! Winifred, Code Gwyn ! we cannot go there."

Down dropped the bundle out of Winifred's hands, "not co to Code Gwyn ! why where in the name of Cot almighty shall we co, then ? I am fure if we don't co there we shall be like the tove out of Noah's hark, wandering about without a pit of resting place to put our foots upon."

Ellen felt her desolate condition, but, as she fancied she had, with great coolness and solidity, weighed all the arguments for returning, or not returning, to Code Gwyn, and as the latter had predominated, to free herself from questions, which in her present irritated state of mind, were very vexatious, she told Winifred, with unusual severity, her commands must be obeyed, without inquiries of any sort ; on the contrary, if she wish-

ed to go to Code Gwyn, or any where else, she was at liberty.

Winifred's joyful note was in an instant changed, her tears as usual were the prelude to a volley of words, she wanted to go no where, not she, Cot help her, it did not signify what became of her, she would even stay and wait on the ould cats.

Ellen warned her not to give so much licence to her tongue.

Winifred vowed she would never speak again.

" I leave this house, said Ellen, tho' clandestinely, *not* guilty ; I shall not want fine clothes, you must therefore prepare things only suitable to a private gentlewoman, mere necessaries, and endeavour to find where Philip is."

Winifred knew, it was at a little shop, kept by a welchwoman in the next street, where, when

permitted to go out, she had made a visiting acquaintance.

“ I think I may trust him,” said Ellen.

“ Trust him ! lost my Lady.”

“ Forget my Lady, Winifred, I shall wish to be concealed.”

“ As to the matter of that, I wish I could not remember you ever was a Lady. Oh my Cot ! poor tear Mr. Evelyn.”

Ellen's face and neck crimsoned, his name had more than once within the last painful hours died on her own tongue, but she had checked the vagrant thought with her utmost effort, and now, after the momentary thrill of pleasure, the long disused sound raised in her throbbing heart, rebuked Winifred severely, and solemnly charged her never to offend in that way more.

The girl's own recollections recurred to Evelyn's love for her mistress; and in that moment she thought Mrs. Evelyn, could not have been so unhappy as the Countess of Castle Howel, but her usual promise to do so no more, made her peace; and she went to seek Philip to concert measures for their departure.

Philip was a plain mannered, well meaning welchman, son of a tenant to Sir Arthur Meredith; and though taken very young into Lord Castle Howel's suit, where he was a great favourite, always retained a love and respect for the hereditary landlord of his kin; Ellen was known to be the pride and idol of the Code Gwyn family, before whom Philip, among the rest of the tenantry, had been used to bow; the warmth of his vindication of her in a family, where as the principals admitted her guilt, it was not likely she would find many advocates among the dependants, had cost him his place, but had it also cost him his life, he would have been the same honest champion.

Winifred soon found her old fellow servant, with whom indeed she had, in disobedience of Lady Margaret's positive commands, held *daily* conference from that of his discharge.

To Philip's great regret he had engaged himself to a gentleman, who was gone to Edinburgh to marry a scotch heiress, and had left him the care of a new carriage, not quite finished which was to convey in the packing trunks the wedding paraphernalia; confidence thus reposed would render his leaving his new master's service a breach of trust, for which he would be answerable to the law, this set Winifred into her old habit of tears and lamentations.

"Lort be coot unto us, poor miserable Laty as my mistress is! what is poor woman's without a man! Cot help them, when they are wandering about without house or home!"

"God forbid, Mrs. Winifred, that should be my Lady's case, why don't she go to Code Gwyn?"

“ Oh Cot help thy foolish head Philip, why our tivel of a reverent, Cot forgive me, has peen here and believed all the ould cats said, and,”—

Philip begged, with tears in his eyes, she would say no more, and having considered a little.

“ I cannot leave the trust reposed in me,” continued the honest servant, “ but if as you say my Lady wishes to be concealed from my Lord’s family, and has not resolved where to go, if she would condescend to ride in the carriage any part of the way, I will lose my life before she shall come to harm, and will be ready when she pleases.”

Winifred’s April day countenance cleared up, she protested Philip had the wisdom of Solomon, and even of Mr. Joseph! who poor tear soul she had not seen in all her troubles; she would go and advise her Lady to take Philip’s offer, and return as soon as she could escape Lady Margaret, who to be sure, like
other

other cats, she believed in her conscious, could see in the dark.

Ellen, whose resolution strengthened every moment, waited her return with great impatience, and immediately accepted the offers of her old servant; Winifred, notwithstanding her Lady's commands, could not bear the thoughts of leaving any of her finery, which, from her own hankering after new clothes, she supposed the old Ladies would seize for their own use, was industrious enough to convey in bundles, most of the wardrobe to Philip's lodging, "they were any where safer than in the hands of the Philistines;" those intended for travelling he packed up by her directions, and all being ready, the carriage waited at the corner of the street. Exactly at eleven which was the family supper hour, and Ellen, eager in the prosecution of a plan, formed and executed under the influence of contentious passions, followed her servant to the hall.

As

As Winifred had, within the last two days, many extra occasions to pass the porter, and as she had in view the object of passing him for the last time, she found it convenient to be very civil, and as he, who like many other quality appendages, was better fed than taught, had time to be very gallant to all the maids, and particularly so to Winifred, when his purple face was a little flushed, which was generally the case at this hour; she relying on his amorous advances, went boldly up to the street door, the corpulent gallant waddled after her, in the scuffle he threw down his candle, and the lamp being near exhausted, Lady Castle Howel passed unobserved, while Cerberus took his sop from the lips of Winifred, who very calmly returned downstairs, through the servants hall, up the area and immediately joined her mistress, who was already in the coach, which, as soon as they were seated, drove off.

Lad

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

OUR Travellers were hardly off the stones, when two things of great importance to people of common understanding, who begin a journey, but which had not been once thought of by our heroine, gave rise to some uneasy sensations.

“ I never travelled but three times before in my life,” said Winifred, “ and that was when your ladyship went”—

“ No more ladyships, Winifred.”

“ Cot pless us, I forgot, but pray what must I call you ? *Miss* Ellen won't do.

Our

Our heroine had not thought of the necessity of fixing on a fictitious name, that of Holt was the first that occurred, "Mrs. Holt," and you Winifred must change yours.

Winifred was rejoiced at that, her's had such a welchy vulgar sound she chose to be called Maria.

Ellen had no objection to Maria, but she thought Jenny, as being something in the sound approximating to Winny, better.

Jenny ! Jane ! oh dear that was as bad as her own, she begged it might be Maria, or Charlotte, or Bella, or—

Ellen bid her chuse what she liked.

Winifred liked Maria vastly, and yet some how, she thought Charlotte genteeler, because it was the queen's, and queens knew what was good for themselves, so if her Lady pleased she would be Maria Charlotte.

“ Maria Charlotte !” repeated Ellen, “ do you think I can call you by two names ?”

“ No ; one at a time was enough, and if her ladyship”—

Ellen was quite angry out Winifred, or Maria Charlotte, was too much in alt to be easily let down.

“ I was going,” continued she, “ to say I never moved but three times, and that was from Code Gwyn to Bath and back, and from Code Gwyn to London.”

“ Ah,” said Ellen, “ *that was a removal indeed !*”

I wonder where we shall move next, may be into our craves, but Cot of his mercy forbid we should be buried among strangers.”

If the reader considers the youth and situation of our fair heroine at this period, friendless, and going from her legal home, into a world

world where she was as much a stranger to manners as to men ; they will not wonder this grave reflection of her volatile servant gave rise to the most gloomy ideas ; to die in the approaching hour of danger was fearful ! but to die without one of the dear relatives, in whose hearts she had lived ! to be buried among strangers !——“ Ah !” she exclaimed bursting into tears, “ what a fate is mine !”

The idea of being “ buried among strangers,” lowered Winifred’s spirits, notwithstanding her acquisition of Maria Charlotte, and she continued silent, while her Lady’s recollection carried her to another painful subject.

People she knew could not be so much as *buried* without money, of which useful article she had very little, she took out her purse, the whole contents of which was some loose silver.

The same reflection had more opportunely occurred to Winifred in the morning, which

now unavailingly troubled her mistress in the evening ; and she had studied ways and means to prevent so disagreeable an evil, as a light purse at the commencement of a long journey ; for as to her own stock, her propensity to finery always kept that low.

In packing the jewels, she had seen Lord Claverton's pocket book open, with the notes half out, she found their value, and knowing her mistress's situation, without one scruple of conscience, gave a fifty to Philip, from whom she received the change ; and now ostentatiously displayed it to Ellen, who had no more doubt but it was her own saving, than *she* had it was her mistress's absolute property.

Ellen had formed no plan but that of leaving Grosvenor-street, and by concealing herself and the so much desired heir—avenge the insults of the Castle Howel's, till her honor should be cleared ; how, when, or by what means that was to be effected she could not foresee, but as in the sanguine hope of
innocence

innocence, she considered it as an event that *would* certainly happen, *where* she spent the intermediate time was a matter of perfect indifference ; at all events, the carriage and her old faithful servant attending, was an opportunity which seemed to be thrown in her way by providence ; and only anxious to escape, from a bondage she considered as tyrannical as unjust, was too much occupied by resentment to pay any regard to consequences.

At the end of the first stage, Philip appeared at the coach door for directions.

Winifred had considered the matter deeper than her mistress, she had no pride to goad *her* on, no resentments to urge, no affections to interest *her* ; Mr. Joseph indeed was of some little moment, but not enough to divert her from the perillous situation, in which Philip's absence would leave them ; she therefore said, they would go on, this ready answer was not only a relief to herself and her
Lady,

Lady, but to the poor fellow himself, who dreaded leaving them at that hour, so near town, alone and unprotected, and rejoiced to find they were not yet to separate, he ordered horses on, and again mounted the coach box.

This stage was travelled in entire silence ; what was next to be done, where to go, and how to support her existence, during, and after an approaching interesting event, were at first pigmies, but now increasing to giants, in Ellen's imagination, and they were in the parlour of the inn, with their little baggage round them, before the silence was broke.

Every blessing of life is enhanced or lessened, every misfortune increased or alleviated by comparison ; the inn where they now stopped, would on the first journey from Wales to Bath, have made Winifred eloquent in its praise, but she had since travelled en suite with the Earl of Castle Howel, where an out rider prepared accommodations at the inns, and the domestics, with the landlord
at

at their head, obsequiously waited their arrival.

“What a paltry inn is this,” cried she, fretfully to Phillip, who brought in the last packages.

Philip calmly answered, that being a stranger to the road himself, he had left the choice of inns to the driver.

He was a fool for his pains she said; was *this* a place fit for *her* Lady and *her*?

Philip was very sorry it was not better, and anxious to exonerate himself from blame, went to the Landlady, and insisted on a superior apartment.

The Postillion from London, understood he was conveying a new carriage under the care of a servant, and he could not be ignorant that the women he took up in Grosvenor-street were the connexions of that servant; these

these observations he as usual repeated to the next driver, while they were changing at Barnet, who brought it on with him to the next inn; Philip's demand, therefore, to have the best apartment was coolly answered, that it was engaged; but it happened the waiter had carried in a glass of water, and heard Winifred address, "her Ladyship."

There was a certain dignity inseparable from the manners of Lady Castle Howel, that confirmed the idea of her quality, which being carried to the landlady, immediately procured the *engaged* apartment for the accommodation of the mistress, who did not give the change a thought, to the great satisfaction of the maid, who thought of nothing else.

Winifred, whose pride suffered at the most trifling omission of the attention and respect she had been lately used to, finding the good effect her Lady's quality had on the people of the inn, forgot the precautions

given her by Ellen, and vauntingly communicated her name and rank; she had also forgot how incompatible with that rank it was to travel in the present style; a new cased coach, with one man servant, not her own, on the naked box, a pair of hack horses, and a prating waiting woman, were sorry appendages to a coronet; and accordingly excited a curiosity at the inn, that added in no small degree to the scandalous chronicle of our heroine's actions.

In the mean time, Ellen began seriously to consult her maid about their future operations; Winifred was incapable of advising, she recommended it to call Philip, who being a *man*, and a *traveller*, must be *better* informed.

Philip had indeed several times journied from Castle Howel to London, and back; he had also attended his Lord twice to Bath, but his honesty and faithful intentions recommended

mended him much more than his mental qualities, or good travelling information; Philip was however called to the consultation, and took his station behind Ellen's chair.

A dead silence ensued.

Philip waited in a kind of pensive attention for what he supposed would be his parting instructions from a Lady, for whom he felt a mixture of respect and compassion.

"Where," said Lady Castle Howel, "would you advise us?"—the word *advise* died on her lips.

Philip's fingers beat a tattoo on the back of her chair.

"What in the name of Cot, are we to do Philip?" cried Winifred, her eyes fixed on his, interrogatively.

Philip would go to the end of the world with his Lady, if he could do it without betraying his trust; but as that obliged him to go to Scotland.—

Winifred's eyes extended to their utmost size: "What and leave us! can't we go too?"

Winifred's fright suggested to Lady Castle Howel, that if they travelled in the coach as far on the road, as they found it convenient, or till they passed some place she should like to stay at, Philip might go on, deliver up his charge and return to them; she accordingly proposed, and he, to their mutual joy, accepted her offer; she saw in this poor fellow an attachment, which desolate as she now was, pleased and comforted her,—they proceeded, journeying to the north, till she found her strength near exhausted, and the rough road to Northallerton, where they slept the third night, having particularly affected her, she with great reluctance told Philip her intention to stop the next day.

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With this separation in view, both mistress and maid, entered the carriage the next morning, in very low spirits.

"Cot be coot unto us," cried Winifred, "two helpless women alone in a strange country, with not a friend to hold their heads, cot help us, nor a man to stand by us; lort preserve his poor servants," and she looked wishfully thro' the glass at Philip; "as to this country, my Laty, the trees, and fields, and broad rivers,—our high brown mountains in Wales!"—

Ellen sighed.

"Wou'd to Cot of his infinite mercy, we were there, for as to this road, to my mind—

Ellen wept.

Winifred longed to give way to her old habit, from the instant she was out of sight of Grosvenor-street, but the fortitude of her
Lady,

Lady, and fear of offending, restrained her ; under the sanction of example, however, it now burst forth, in the most bitter wailings, at their cruel fate, mixed with tenderness for her Lady, and invectives against the sinners of the Castle Howel family, nor indeed did the Earl escape.

Ellen's mind, the seat of delicacy and rectitude ; no longer irritated by a treatment wounding to her feelings, nor hurt by the privation of dignity and respect attendant on the character of the Countess of Castle Howel ; out of hearing of the sarcastic sneers of Lady Margaret, and the provoking pity and ill acted friendship of the old Ladies, reverted to a bitter reflection to her situation, and a retrospect of all the circumstances that had led to it.

In the hour of dissipation, in the very moment in which she had been betrayed into the embarrassment which induced her to accept Lord Claverton's offered assistance,
her

her heart smote her, and altho' her inexperience of the world, and ignorance of its etiquettes, blinded her to the consequence, there was a something so retrograde to her spirit, and sense of honor in pecuniary obligations, that nothing but the immediate insult from Lord Charles Dash would have prevailed on her to accept it; not that she had the most distant suspicion he could have a latent design in seizing a moment so critical to oblige her.

He had succeeded so well in concealing from every part of Lord Castle Howel's family, his passion for the Countess, that the Earl was always pleased to see him at his house, or in attendance on his Lady; who on her part considered him in the interesting light of an old acquaintance, and one to whom she was obliged; his former passion, so eloquently pleaded by Joseph and Winifred, but so entirely reprobated by her friends, if at all recollected, it was with such a mixture of indifference and incredulity, that it was

not in the texture of a mind, at once so thoughtless and candid, to harbour a sentiment on that account, that could take from the obliging respectful attention he paid the whole family.

With Lady Margaret, it has been observed, he stood in a high degree of favour ; and even the incident, that according to public statement, had dishonored her brother, could not deprive a man of *her* partial esteem, who still continued his patronage of Dr. Macfhean.

There, are indeed some ladies in this liberal age, who have such prodigious regard to the virtue of their *own* sex, they will forgive, receive, and often love, a known seducer ! while their extreme purity shrinks with indignation and contempt, from the unhappy victim of his art ! Lady Margaret was of this discription ; she made great allowance for *male* offenders, but abhorred all *female* frailty.

Lad

Lady Castle Howel was entirely clear of a thought that could injure her honor, or her character, if laid open to the world; but now that the pride natural to a young and falsely accused wife, was no longer insulted; that she had taken the step most likely to punish those who had personally offended her; she could not help feeling and lamenting the folly that had led her from *real* into the pursuits of *imaginary* happiness.

When she recollected the distress from which the generosity of her Lord had relieved her family, and the narrowness, not to say poverty, from which he had raised her; when she thought on the splendid sphere in which he had placed her, and remembered how in mere wantonness of folly she had squandered his fortune; how she had disregarded the assertions of a man, whose integrity of soul was conspicuous in every action, and believed those of such a reptile as Mrs. Morley; shame and regret overpowered her; and this shame and regret led to feelings still more painful.

Her character was lost, and she could not but feel, that *this*, a privation of the first importance to woman, stamped also disgrace on a husband, who adored her, who seemed to live but in her sight, who had often in transport vowed the possession of her was a talisman against all temporal evil,—that she endeared to him every other blessing,—that his house was a terrestrial paradise, and she the angel who irradiated it.

And when she reflected that he had torn himself from her arms,—all his comforts changed to bitterness; that he had abandoned his family and his home, unable to meet the one or endure the other; that his extreme sensibility had perhaps impelled him to hide both his shame and sorrow from the world, in some solitude, where they preyed on him with redoubled force; his leaving her, which she at first deemed an act of cruelty, appeared one of mercy.

“Ah!” cried she, “believing me guilty, what hindered him from spurning me from

his house? no, he chose rather to become a wanderer himself.—Oh! my dear Lord, where, where are you? why cannot I throw myself at your feet, to implore pardon of my folly, and to vindicate my innocence; what will become of me?”

“For the love of Cot,” cried Winifred, “let us turn back.”

“Back!” answered Ellen, “to Lady Margaret, to——Oh, never!”—

“No, no, not there; my dear Lady, but to Code Gwyn.”

They were now just within sight of Durham; the sun was setting and left on the beautiful hills which surround this charming neighbourhood, a sombre majesty that render such views particularly charming at the close of day; the scene caught her eye, she involuntarily put her head out of the coach window, a chariot was passing, a voice exclaimed, “heavens! Lady Castle Howel.”

Surprised and disconcerted she hastily drew in, "Who could that be?"

Before Winifred had time to answer, by some mismanagement of the Postillion, the carriage overset.

Winifred had excellent lungs, which she did not fail to make use of on this occasion; Philip was thrown off the box, his collar bone broke, and so bruised he could not move.

Winifred's shrieks, which now finding her Lady did not speak, grew louder and more terrific, either reached the carriage which had passed, or the attention of those within was not withdrawn from Lady Castle Howel, they immediately stopped, two Ladies alighted, who with their servant came to their assistance.

Winifred's head and shoulders were out of the window, crying for help; her Lady was teat.

"Heaven forbid," said the younger Lady, affected almost to fainting.

Winifred's grief was echoed by the surrounding woods.

The elder Lady proposed putting the lifeless body, as it then appeared into the chariot, when a middle aged person in a shabby black coat, sauntered on by the inside of the hedge, he immediately closed a book he was reading, and hastened towards them.

Perhaps there never was seen a more interesting figure than our heroine at this moment; her hat was off, her fine hair, which had not been dressed (as the term is) since she left London, only combed out of the powder, hung in beautiful disorder over her shoulders; her eyes indeed were closed but her long eye lashes, and fine eye brows contrasted to the most beautiful complexion in the world, together with her situation, combined to excite compassion, admiration, and curiosity.

The stranger felt her pulse, and to the great joy of all the little group, declared she was not dead. He took a lancet from his case of instruments.

"It will be sometime, Madam," said he, addressing himself to the elder Lady, "before you can reach Durham; with your leave I will take a little blood from the young lady.

"The lort be praist for ever and ever," cried Winifred, "you are a Doctor!"

The blood dropped very slow from the orifice.—

"The Lady," said the man in black, "is really in danger. I live not a quarter of a mile up that lane; permit me, madam."—

Mrs. Dean Holt, the Lady in whose way fortune had thus thrown our heroine, replied,
the

the accident happening just as her carriage was passing, she had stopped, but the Lady was a stranger to her.

“ Bless me !” cried the Doctor, looking at Miss Holt, who was weeping over Ellen,— but thought he, if she is a stranger, why should I wait for leave ? and he immediately led the way to his own house.

“ Nancy, my dear,” said he to a smart handsome brunette, about his own age, “ get the chintz bed ready.”

“ What for ? who is this ? what has happened ?”

“ Hoot ; do you think I can answer questions, do you see the condition the Lady is in.”

The chintz bed was soon ready.

Dr. Gordon, our benevolent host, was the son of a Scotch manufacturer, who tho' he
got

got his son instructed in the rudiments of a scholastic education, at a small expence, by the clergyman of his own town, found no small difficulty in supporting him at the college of Edinburgh; the young man's application was intense and indiscriminate; it was uncertain, not, what line his father *would*, but what he *could* fix him in, and like many of his countrymen, he attained a smattering of all sciences without being master of any; he knew a little of physic, less of theology and still less of law; yet had a diploma, was ordained and admitted a member of the faculty of advocates, having embraced each of these professions in turn, without attaining a settlement in any, he was imprudent enough to fall in love, and marry clandestinely, the daughter of a very great man, who had fourteen children, without a sixpence of *filler* among them, but who being fifteenth cousin to Sir Hector Mac Burlish, of the North Highlands, did not chuse his daughter should marry the son of a mechanic.

Sir

Sir Hector however gave him a small living, he removed to the highlands, and getting also an appointment to a free school, became at once teacher of the gospel and of the A, B, C; but unfortunately happening to offend a Lord, who was cousin to another Lord, who had married the relation of a great man in the south, he was marked for ruin; a prosecution was commenced against him for observing on a text from scripture, namely, "he that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; now" said our irreverent reverend, "if that be the case, the Lord above certainly owes *our* Lord nothing."

Those who imagined the Doctor had nothing to apprehend from such an expression, are poor ignorant beings, not enlightened by the practice of some scotch lawyers, who far from that troublesome regard to honor, and the established laws of their country, which distinguish every *society*, whatever effect it may have on individuals, in *our* southern hemisphere, associate themselves in a body, to make black white, and white black, at the

nod of him who has the crumbs to distribute: A prodigious *great* man, who if he had not been a great man would have been a very *filly* one; but who as it was, if not a luminary of the law, to dazzle posterity with his blaze, will be at least remembered as the rushlight of *this* age, and serve like a will-o' the-whisp to warn the *next* of the filth, and quagmires thro' which he has waded; this great man was determined to ruin poor Gordon.

He talked! gods how he talked!

A few old fashioned men, said it was against the law; but the question was not between plaintiff and defendant, it was between the law and the lawyers; the law carried it, but poor Gordon was ruined notwithstanding; he was banished from the milk and honey country, and having tried various means of procuring a subsistence, put off his divinity, by which he would have starved, and took to physick by which he now just managed to live.

C H A P. VI.

BUT the chintz bed waits while we are talking of scotch laws, parsons and physick.

To this gentleman's care, and to his chintz bed, was the beautiful Lady Castle Howel now obliged for shelter and protection; she received more fright than personal injury from the accident, but was nevertheless sensible of that ready welcome, that always enhances the kind offices of hospitality.

Mr. Gordon mixed up a draught from his medical stores, which as soon as she was laid on the chintz bed, he made her swallow.

The Ladies who had lent their carriage to convey her to Gordon's, anxiously asked, as they

they found he was a medical man, if, refering to her situation, she was in any danger; Gordon answered with the true pyhsicalequivoque, if certain effects followed the accident which might be feared, there probably would be danger, if not, which might be hoped, there possibly would *not*.

Mrs. Holt was a very good, tho' remarkably proud woman, her niece, the amiable Caroline, then on a visit to the Dean her uncle, we have before introduced to the reader; she had been on a short excursion with her aunt, when accident occasioned a meeting with Lady Castle Howel, and a renewal of subjects she had travelled so many miles to avoid.

Any stranger who saw Ellen two months before, the pride of her family, the model of fashion, the rage of admiration, and who saw her *now* without friends, shew, or attendants, except one poor maid, and an accidental footman, would at least have made
a moral

a moral reflection on the vicissitudes of human life.

Caroline Holt did more, she so effectually pleaded the cause of humanity to her aunt, as to prevail on her to stay at Gordon's, till a doctor from Durham could arrive.

The good Lady therefore returned to the chamber where Ellen lay in a restless dose.

Mrs. Holt was exceedingly shocked and embarrassed, at having been witness of the accident, as she did not well know what step to take with respect to the family;—those who judged of this Lady from sight, could form no idea of her disposition, for never was sensibility, good nature, benevolence and piety so entirely disguised by a haughty demeanour; and harsh countenance.

Ellen's story was universally known, and Mrs. Holt held her in all possible contempt; yet she could not hear her groans, and see her

her lovely face distorted by pain, without feeling the most lively compassion, and perhaps some little curiosity to know if she was so very bad as the world reported.

When Ellen was a little composed, and Gordon gone to give his assistance to Philip, she entered into a whispering gossip with Winifred, who had gained great credit by her fortitude while her Lady was in danger; but from her she could not understand any thing more than her own hatred of the Ladies of the Castle Howel family, and her regret they did not go to Code Gwyn; not that Winifred kept any thing back out of prudence, but that she told every thing so indiscriminately, it was hardly possible to discover whether she was ignorant of her Lady's levity, or the Lady innocent of any evity at all; but be it as it would, Mrs. Holt naturally concluded, she among the rest, would be one of the subjects of her future communication, and did not think it absolutely necessary, all the world should know, Dean
Holt's

Holt's lady, a Bishop's daughter! was watching by the bed of a frail female; and therefore sharply rebuked Winifred, recommending it to her to be taciturne.

Poor Winifred did not know what taciturne was, she thought she might say any thing to a dear good lady, who was kind to *her* Lady; she expected a plain Mrs. would be proud to know she had the honor to assist a Countess; it could not occur to her there *were* Countesses on whom many a humble woman would look down, much less that her Lady was in that unfortunate predicament.

Dr. Ferguson now arrived; and having acquainted himself with all Gordon had done with respect to Ellen, paid some of his most elaborate compliments to Mrs. Holt, in the course of which he made so many bold advances, to know who and what the patient was, who he perceived to be both young and handsome, that she, ashamed of her own urbanity, abruptly withdrew, under the pretence of laying down till her carriage arrived.

Gordon then requested the Doctor to examine the fracture of the servant which he had set.

If Dr. Ferguson had not made some slight alteration in dressing and medicines, he could not have shewn *his superior skill*, and as they were *very* slight, we forgive him.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



